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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to present a view of Latin American males and females that describes the situation in Latin America more accurately than the current stereotypical view accepted in the United States. The author discusses the roots of the North American misconception, citing differences between Latin American and North American cultures and between research done by male and female social scientists. Basic themes in Latin American culture are delineated as a background to sex roles. Latin American sex roles are discussed in terms of cultural and linguistic considerations; sexuality, courtship, and marriage; family structures; and women in the world of work. The author concludes that sex roles as defined in Latin America provide for well marked patterns of interactions and the division of labor and that the roles are balanced and complementary. He points out that women are seen as better prepared to discharge the tasks of balancing the spirit and body and raising future generations, while men are charged with the responsibility of providing economic support for the family. The author asserts that for both sexes, the meaning of life is separate from work and specific duties and that life is made meaningful through personal interactions. (MK)

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Discussion Paper Series

MACHISMO AND VIRGINIDAD:
SEX ROLES IN LATIN AMERICA

by

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Machismo and Virginidad

I. A Case of Misperception

"... and he did his macho thing." This phrase when uttered by a female resident of the United States of America is used to transmit a message that is unintelligible to a Latin American, even though the key word in the phrase -- "macho" -- was imported from that area of the world. The intended message is that the male acted in an inconsiderate way, that the behavior lacked sensitivity, or that he behaved despotically. In other words, to act like a macho is to be self-centered and also to act as if women were not worth any consideration. Furthermore, the label is used in the U. S. A. to identify males who view females as sexual objects, i.e., as sources of sexual gratification only.

The Latin American would be surprised when told what was meant by the label "macho" as used in the United States of America. That same Latin American would be confused if not befuddled when told this image is considered to be descriptive of the attitudes and behaviors of Latin American males. The pre-existing view created by Hollywood of the suave man of easy address, who tried to seduce females with adulation and small attentions -- the "Latin Lover," although somewhat inaccurate was understandable to the Latin Americans. The new view of the Latin American male as a chauvinistic clod who rules over a submissive, respectful (to a fault), and spiritless female is simply unintelligible to the Latin American.

The purpose of this paper is to present a different view of the Latin Americans, both male and female, which describes the situation in Latin America more accurately than the current stereotypical view accepted in the United States of America. Given the misperception of the nature of the sex roles in Latin America prevalent in the United States of America I will first discuss my views

as to the roots of this misperception. The discussion of this issue will show that the Latin American sex roles cannot be understood without making references to the major themes of the Latin American culture. The discussion of the roots of the misperception will be followed by the discussion of the basic themes present in the Latin American culture. This discussion will be followed by a description of the Latin American sex roles. At various points in the discussion, I will make comparisons with the situation in the U.S.A. in order to make the message about Latin America intelligible to the North American and at the same time show how it was possible for North Americans to misunderstand the Latin American situation.

II. Wishful Thinking

The views about Latin America, on the subject of sex roles, held by North Americans can be traced to the work of many social scientists who used the Spanish word "macho" to refer to the male role in Latin America. My first encounter with the use of this concept to describe males' roles was in which Stycos (1955), in a book on fertility in Puerto Rico, used the concepts "Complejo de Machismo," (Machismo Complex) and "Complejo de Virginidad" (Virginity Complex) to refer to sex roles in Puerto Rico. He argued that the refusal to engage in birth control by Puerto Ricans emanated from these attitudes (sex roles). As a freshman in college, I reacted violently to the picture presented by Stycos. My reaction lead me to write my bachelor's thesis on the subject of sex roles; and subsequently, I have continued on and off to work in this area.

Stycos was not alone in his perceptions of sex roles in Latin America. Almost every article, book, or commentary I have come across presents the male as dominant and the female as submissive. The male-female relationship was also described as controlled by "the double standard." Females were required to be virgins when they got married and the males were allowed total freedom in the

area of sexuality. Extramarital affairs by males are presented as socially accepted and condemned very strictly in the case of females.

The picture that emerges from the reports and works of North American social scientists in my view was distorted and, most importantly, incomplete. The image is one of a male-dominated society; however, as a Latin male I knew that my life was ultimately controlled by the women in my life. Other Latin American males similarly were aware that their mothers and wives were central in their lives. The so-called "double standard" in the view of Latin Americans represents pampering or spoiling of the male rather than effective control of the male over the female. Furthermore, the Latin male knows that the label "macho" in many situations is used pejoratively and therefore to be a "macho" is not necessarily something to be proud of.

For many years, I perceived the misperception and misrepresentation of Latin American sex roles as another example of applying the cultural standards of the U.S.A. to the Latin American situation without considering the Latin American cultural context. That is, the North American rather than Latin American cosmology was used to organize and interpret the data. Since 1973, I have developed a complementary explanation to account for the consistency and persistance of the misperception.

In 1973, the Journal of Marriage and the Family published in its May issue five articles on Latin American females. These five articles were written by North American females and were the first scientific assessments of sex roles in Latin America that I found not to be inaccurate or incomplete. This made me realize that all the North American sources I had come in contact with were the work of males. The differences in perspectives between the work of male observers and female observers is dramatized by the choice of label for the female sex role.

The early (male) North American observers and commentators choose to refer to the female role as the Virginidad (virginity) complex. This choice of label suggests that these observers considered the demand that a bride be a virgin the central component of the sex role of the female. As Evelyn P. Stevens (1973) points out, this is not so. Ms. Stevens suggests the label Marianismo to refer to the female role in Latin America. She argues that this label points to the basic theme of that sex role--a comparison or parallel between the woman and the Virgin Mary. Ms. Stevens goes on to point out that this label also highlights the areas of spiritual life and motherhood in which superiority or superior rank are ascribed to the Latin American female.

The contrast between the work of Stevens and the other females writing in 1973 with the various examples of work done by males before suggested that the males had projected their own perspective to Latin America when analyzing their data. To put it bluntly, I suspect that they have seen glimpses of what is in their mind a replica of their ideal and then have discounted evidence that shows that the situation is not quite that way. In other words, they have engaged in wishful thinking. For example, the researchers took hold of the word "macho" and used it to label what they "saw." If they had looked closer, they would have found that the Latin American does not use that word often and that it can be used both positively and pejoratively. Furthermore, they would have found that when used in the sense given to it by the researchers, this word is used pejoratively. Its positive usages are more closely related to the English words of hero or great man. In some instances, the word macho is also used to mean handsome or good looking.

If the early male commentators had looked carefully at the value structure of the Latin American cultures, as the above mentioned females did, they would have seen that some of the areas they were highlighting were peripheral in these

cultures and that they were not considering areas which are highly valued by Latin Americans. Had they looked carefully at the Latin American cosmology and its implication for the definition of sex roles, the resultant imagery would have been quite different.

In recent years, many North American social scientists have become interested in the issue of Latin American sex roles. This interest can be traced to the emergence of the Women's Liberation Movement. The specific motives of the increase in interest in this subject vary from a hope to export "The Movement" to a desire to show that the North American female has it relatively easy (the "you've come a long way, baby" syndrome). Irrespective of the motive behind the interest in sex roles in Latin America, those that turn their attention to this issue in the U.S.A. sooner or later wonder why the Women's Liberation Movement has not caught on "over there." This preoccupation assumes that men are dominant and arrogant, and women are oppressed. In the culture of the U.S.A., given such oppression, the oppressed will revolt. When we look at the Latin values, we will discover that the situation is not viewed as oppressive or out of kilter.

In order to make clearer the importance of the culture as a whole, let us consider briefly the situation in the U.S.A. In this society, sex roles clearly define the female as unequal to the male, and social structures have emerged that block women from equal opportunities and therefore prevent them from being successful. This situation is clearly contrary to the key values of success, fairness (equal opportunity), and equality. In this situation, the Women's Liberation Movement can be seen as an attempt to bring the sex roles in line with the major values of the society.

In the case of Latin America, if we look at the culture and the sex roles in their wholeness, one would find that the sex roles are harmonious with the culture and that the roles are harmonious with each other, and in their own way

are balanced. In order to make this clear, we need to discuss the basic themes of the Latin American cultures.

III. Latin American Culture: Basic Themes

There are many social scientists who claim that it is not possible to talk of an Asian, Latin American or African culture. They argue that each society has a unique perspective. In the case of the Latin American societies, research has shown that there are various key patterns or themes that appear in all Latin American societies--not only do the themes recur, but the specific views are basically the same in every society. Of course, there are differences in the structures derived from these views, but in most cases the differences are truly insignificant. In this section, I will outline some of the key themes and views held by the different societies.

Instead of presenting generalized and/or idealized patterns that would encompass all Latin American cultures, but describe none, I have used one culture as base--Puerto Rico. I have chosen the Puerto Rican culture as base because it is the one I am most familiar with and one in which I have conducted systematic empirical research. In order to determine if the Puerto Rican views are shared by other Latin American cultures, I have checked my findings with views and findings reported in the literature, as well as by relying on informants. The patterns described below are present in many Latin American societies, although they may not be articulated in the precise format and structure described below. In order to facilitate the presentation, I will refer to the patterns as the Latin American culture; in those areas where I have detected or suspect major differences between the specific cultures, I will specifically point out that there is variability among the cultures.

I have found in my research and study of Latin American cultures that there are four basic themes that serve as the basis of all the aspects of the

cultures: Fatalism, "Dignidad," Personalism, and "Ser" (being). In addition to these themes, I will also discuss the absence of the theme success, in these cultures. The absence of success as a valued aspect of human behavior is one of the major differences between the Latin American culture and the culture of the U.S.A. This difference is one of the keys to understanding the differences in the definitions of sex roles between these cultures.

Fatalism. The Latin American assumes that humans have no control over their lives nor over reality. The universe is controlled by forces out of the control of human beings. God or some other supernatural force is seen as the ultimate controller of the Universe. God's rule over the Universe is not seen as remote or as systematic. The Latin American sees God as directly and continuously involved in running the Universe and, specifically, everybody's life. God's intervention in one's life is a fact but the tone and direction of it is not predictable. Furthermore, God is not seen necessarily as being loving, compassionate, or rational. The image of God is that of a majestic figure or force that is capricious and temperamental, that will intervene in one's life to bring joy or sorrow indiscriminately. Then again, God may not interevene directly and may allow His original plans for you to follow the outline described by the church, i.e., you will be rewarded for good works and punished for sin.

The Latin American refers to God's plan as fate or destiny. As implied above, one's fate may be pre-ordained or God may change it at any time independently of one's behavior. God may also react to one's petitions and modify one's fate. The content of one's fate or changes in it are seen as unpredictable and need not follow any rational or intelligible structure. In a sense, one can never be certain of what God will do. This distrusting attitude, which also marks the Latin American relations with others, is clearly demonstrated by the way Latin Americans pray.

Most Latin Americans will pray at church or at ritualistic situations using the church's basic prayer, The Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, The Creed, and other formal prayers. Free prayers rarely are prayers of thanksgiving or adoration. Most people recur to prayer at times of need, specifically at times of crisis, and their prayers take the form of petition. Generally, such prayers involve a "promesa" (promise of commitment), addressed to an intermediary (a saint, Virgin Mary or the spirit of a loved one). "Promesas" are really a form of bargaining or propose exchange, rather than supplications or statements reocgnizing God's power over one's life. The format of such prayers generally is the following: "... (intermediary is named) ... if you see that ... (a petition is inserted) ... I will (a commitment is made to perform a specific act) for you or in your name." The commitment can be to do without something one cherishes, or fast for X number of days, or grow a beard, or dress in sack cloth, i.e., the person promises to make a symbolic or real sacrifice. The commitment could also be to glorify the intermediary or God by having masses said or building a church, creating some kind of sanctuary, or celebrate a given number of rosaries.

The pattern of prayer described above suggests that the petitioner is not certain that God will hear him/her, and a symbolic sacrifice or payment is offered to gain God's attention. In other words, there is the feeling that you need to "bribe" God. This attitude reflects a low level of trust toward God. This view is one other manifestation of the belief that God is unpredictable and impulsive. Nonetheless, there is also the feeling that God is being flooded with petitions and that He will only grant a few. Therefore, a person is not terribly disillusioned if his/her petition(s) is not granted. Of course, if the petition is not granted, one is not obligated to make the sacrifice or make the special payment.

The implicit distrust manifested in the pattern of prayer is not contained to the relationship with God. Latin Americans are distrustful of other people and

especially strangers. In this case, distrust is not limited to the fear that others may work against one's best interests but is generalized to become a feeling of insecurity. One can never be sure that others will deliver or continue to support one. Complete trust and vulnerability is rare and occurs only within families and between selected friends.

Going back to the issue of fatalism, the Latin American feels that one's fate is to be accepted with resignation. This does not mean one simply gives up. Everyone is expected to make attempts to modify one's fate by prayer or by other means. Each person is expected to select at least one area in their life in which they would do whatever they could to upset fate. At the very least, one should complain loudly about an unwanted or undesirable fate.

Irrespective of one's attempts to change one's fate, if it does not change, one need not feel that one failed. Even changes in fate are not viewed as the direct results of one's actions; the individual is not responsible for his/her fate. The sense of absence of responsibility for the individual is manifested in the statements "que será, será" (whatever will be, will be) and "asi es la vida" (so is life or that is life). These statements are generally used to conclude a recounting of misfortunes or unproductive attempts to change the course of events in one's life.

The Latin American sees fate as decisive in a number of key areas in their lives, the most important being the moment of death. In their view, death will come at its appointed time and only rarely would one find God giving a person a reprieve. Interestingly enough, many "jokes" or humoristic anecdotes focus on death and its aftermath. Most of these stories stress the fact that death is unavoidable and that God controls it (although at time the "celestial bureaucrats" may commit errors--generally assigning one to the wrong place).

The amount of joy or sorrow in one's life is also controlled by fate. No amount of good works or ritual behavior will change that. In fact, the idea

of payment ("promesas") for special dispensations or changes in fate is but a manifestation of the general idea that every joy is related to a sorrow and vice versa.

A third area in which fate is seen as all controlling is in the area of social position. One's rank and roles (positions) in society are viewed as controlled by fate rather than by one's personal abilities, potential, or determination. This specifically applies to one's sex and occuaption. One's job is not obtained necessarily by one's abilities but luck (fate) is the controlling force. In short, one does not make one's luck or fate.

If one is blessed with "buena fortuna" ("good" fate or fortune) one must accept it with gratitude and be sure not to be arrogant. After all, it is not for any personal merit that one is so blessed. On the other hand, if one's fate is not "good," one may try to change it, against all odds. As we shall see later on, one need not try to struggle against one's fate but if one does, one is respected for doing so--even if one is not successful. If you give up, then you lose face, and should feel shame.

This fatalism has one very important consequence for the emotional state of the Latin American. As one is not responsible for misfortunes, one need not feel guilt. It must be noted that the Spanish word for guilt (culpa) really means responsibility in English. In fact, there is no adquate Spanish translation for guilt or guilty. It must be noted that the Spanish language has a peculiar way to express responsibility that allows individuals to shift responsibility from themselves. For example, I can say "El libro se perdio" (The book got lost) or "Se me perdio el libro" (The book got lost from me). Note that the expression reflects the idea that the book was the responsible party and not I. Even in the most directly personal expression (rarely used) "yo perdí el libro" (I lost the book), the idea conveyed is that I lost track of the book. In order to

express personal responsibility, you have to say "Yo extraure, or bote el libro" (I lost or threw away the book). This point of the structure of the language clearly indicates the lack of sense of responsiblity and control over life that permeates the cosmology of the Latin American. Life is controlled by fate and not by the individual.

Dignidad. The impact of the belief in fate on self image for the Latin American is countered by an emphasis on "dignidad." The concept "dignidad" refers to a strong sense of personal worth. Generally, "dignidad" is translated into English as dignity, but such translation fails to reproduce the forceful sense of self-worth that the concept carries in Spanish. Some translate "dignidad" as self-respect, or honor, but neither of these translations convey the psychological nor existential meanings of the concept.

For the Latin American, "dignidad" is self-respect, honor, worthiness, and competence. It also implies equality inasmuch as every person has this attribute in the same degree. This is because the foundation of "dignidad" is that we all were created by God in His image and He abides in us. We are then worthy and must be respected as God is respected. In this sense, respect is the social recognition of one's "dignidad." To lose respect, to lose face, is to allow one's "dignidad" to be soiled.

Inasmuch as the only real worthy attribute anyone may own is his/her "dignidad," it must be protected at all costs. "Dignidad" does not refer to how one acts but to how others act toward one. Dignidad is viewed as an internal, wholistic quality of human beings and not a matter of style or as a pose in a given situation. In the U.S., the word dignity implies a tone, a style or a pose that one takes in given stressful situations. In Latin America, "dignidad" is inherent in the individual, and is unrelated to style or how one reacts to a situation. It is assumed that all people have this attribute and the issue is not whether I act with dignity but whether others treat one as worthy of respect. Disrespectful

behavior and/or insults are then attacks to one's "dignidad" or honor, and must be answered. In fact, most interpersonal conflicts in Latin America are related to real or imagined attacks on one's "dignidad" or that of one's relatives.

In the view of Latin Americans, there is no excuse to abuse the respect, honor, or sense of worthiness, i.e., the "dignidad," of anyone. As suggested above, all persons are said to have "dignidad" and hence are worthy of respect and honor. This is especially true in relationships between people of different social strata. As previously mentioned, position in the social strata reflects the workings of fate and does not reflect any inherent ability or quality of the person. Inasmuch as a person's fate is unrelated to his/her inner being, then it has no effect on that person's "dignidad." That is, every person is due respect irrespective of their fate and the concomitants of it, like social position and rank. This, of course, includes one's sex role.

The attitudes toward educated people provides a clear cut example of how the concomitants of fate are unrelated to dignidad. Latin American perceive education as a concomitant of social position and therefore determined by fate and not by personal abilities, qualities or achievements. Education is a process of obtaining information and learning skills, like reading and writing, that allow one to explore the world of ideas. Such process is only open to people with economic resources to pay the costs and who do not need to work early in life. Education, in their view, does not affect one's capacity to learn from experience and to deal with life (reality).

For the Latin American, a person's ability to deal with life is determined by their intelligence, alertness, and determination. In their view, all persons have the ability to confront life and learn from it. That is, all persons are intelligent. Intelligence is seen as independent of the level of education attained. No amount of education will increase your level of intelligence, and your level of intelligence need not make a difference on whether or not you have

an education. Nonetheless, those with exceptional mental abilities (not necessarily intelligence) if given an opportunity will obtain more from their education. In short, intelligence is not dependent on fate but rather it refers to an inherent quality of the person.

It is important to note that in the area discussed above, the Latin American makes a distinction between education and intelligence that is foreign to the world view of the North American. This distinction allows the Latin American to accept different levels of training and grant deference to those educated but at the same time it provides a basis to grant respect to everyone irrespective of educational attainments. Latin Americans grant the same respect to a person with post-graduate degrees as to a person who never learned to read or write. In other words, external factors like money, education, and social psotion are seen as deserving some kind of special treatment (deferences) but the special treatment does not include more respect. All persons are deserving of respect because they are creations of God and made in His image. "Dignidad" then relates to those inherent qualities that God granted us.

Personalism. The notion of "dignidad" discussed above in turn serves as the basis or support of various other themes of importance of the Latin American culture. One of the most important of these themes is personalism. In order to make clear what is involved in this idea, we need to discuss further the idea of equality.

As implied above, the concept of dignidad refers in a sense to equality. Dignidad refers to equality in the sense that all people are equally deserving of respect. This notion of equality is radically different from the one commonly held by North Americans. In the U.S.A., all people are considered to be equal not because they have the same inherent capacities or qualities but rather because they have the same opportunities and rights. That is, in North America equality is defined in terms of conditions external to the individual rather than

in terms of inherent or internal conditions. It must be noted that rights are not viewed as a quality of a person but rather as a possession, inseparable from the individual, but external to him/her. Because rights and opportunities are external, one can take advantage of them or exercise them. "Dignidad" by contrast is lived or recognized by others but not exercised. It is not a possession but a quality. One has it, and one has no choice of exercising it. One's only choice is to defend his "dignidad" if it is soiled or insulted. Most interpersonal conflicts in Latin America are traceable to assaults on or insults of a person's "dignidad."

Given the North American view that equality is external to individuals, then the differences between individuals are considered to be due to differences in ability and personal qualities. Achievements are seen as reflecting the worth of the person. In Latin America, the case is quite different. In fact, Latin Americans do not focus on equality nor do they really perceive it.

In my own research, I found that Latin Americans will assert that there is a sense of equality in that we all share in the human condition. When asked explicitly if they feel that people are equal, the most common response is: "Cada persona es un mundo"--each person is a world apart. Others, although not being so definitive in stating that every person is unique, respond by saying that people are not equal. If the question is phrased in terms of opportunities, the response is also the same: no two persons have the same opportunities. Some Latin Americans will agree that people have the same potentials but in their view fate will determine to what degree they develop those potentials.

In short, Latin Americans focus on the differences that exist between human beings. This emphasis on differences leads to the perception of each individual as a whole--a person--which is unique and worthy by the fact of being. I have chosen to call this emphasis on the person as a unique being, personalism.

Another component of the emphasis on the person is that the world is viewed by each person in a unique way. The meaning of the world is generated by each person; and in the sense that each person constructs his/her own world, each person is the center of the universe. If we look at this notion from a different point of reference, it can be said that for the Latin American, things are real only if absorbed or interpreted by a person. Making another shift in perspective, this notion is translated into the view that things are real as long as they are internalized by a person.

The epistemiology implicitly stated above has some important consequences for the life of the Latin American. On the abstract level, it leads to devaluation of the formal, systematic scientific research process and its products. That is, any person's understanding of the world is valid inasmuch as each person will grasp the universe only as it relates to them. Scientific research simply produces one other perspective. In short, science is viewed as limited and limiting.

The notion that the universe can only have meaning in how it is viewed by specific persons has very important consequences for interpersonal relations. As many visitors to Latin America have noted, Latin Americans, although friendly and hospitable towards foreigners, seem shy and slow to relate openly with them. The key to these seemingly contradictory attitudes and behaviors is that friendship in Latin America is built on the acquisition and absorption of knowledge about the real person. That is, as one obtains data about another person, especially intimate data, one generates a picture of that person and, in a sense, one absorbs that person. When a Latin American wishes to open a friendship, he/she will provide you with intimate data. Such sharing will continue if it is matched by you. Friendship in Latin America means that the other becomes part of you and vice versa. This mutual absorption also generates bonds of duties and responsibilities, e.g., one does not deny a friend a favor or evade helping

a friend in need. To ignore a friend's requests is like ignoring oneself. To refuse a personal petition from a friend is considered an insult to the petitioner as well as prima-facie evidence of the untrustworthiness of the person refusing. The latter means that one is not necessarily worthy of respect, i.e., one's "dignidad" is put in doubt. To deny a favor to a friend may lead to losing a friend and the "loss of face."

An injury to a friend, and the concomitant interpretation of it as an insult, is always considered more grave than when the same behavior is directed at a stranger or casual acquaintance. This particular view has very important consequences for the working of bureaucracies in Latin America. If asked for a favor, a bureaucrat cannot refer to rules and regulations to deny it without creating a cloud for the friendship. Friends expect to have red tape cut out for them and to receive special treatment. This, of course, means that bureaucrats cannot function impersonally.

The fact that friends receive special treatment and strangers are subjected to the rules as written is but part of the complications generated by personalism for bureaucracies. As strangers are not only treated more harshly, but in a sense are non-persons, rank sometimes means little in the workings of bureaucracies. For example, a staff person in an embassy to a Latin American country, who has been there for a long time, generally has easier access to high officials than the Ambassador.

Personalism, as I will point out later on, also has consequences for the definition of sex roles and for the relationships between the sexes. Both males and females are seen as persons who deserve respect and to whom one owes favors if a friendship relationship exists. The obligations toward friends match those that one has toward members of the family, especially in the case of the Godparents of one's children. The Godparents of a person's children are considered family by choice.

A person is a Godparent to a child and a "compadre" o "comadre" to the child's parents. The choice of labels shows that the link between the adults is important. The choice of "compadres" in many situations is used to generate friendship like bonds to one's boss or to people higher in the social strata. A person in the higher social strata would not think of rejecting a petition to become a Godparent to a child as that would be an insult to the petitioner as well as evidence of one's sense to self-importance (which is considered unacceptable). Consequently, "compadrazgo" (co-parenthood) leads to the blurring of social distinctions.

The sense of duty to one's family extends to remote cousins. This also leads to the blurring of social distinctions. This blurring has been interpreted by some commentators as universalism; that is, a sense of equality that permeates the social structure. In my view, the so-called universalism is but one of the consequences of personalism.

Other commentators have identified a theme in Latin American cultures that they call humanism. Again, the referent is to the focus on personal qualities and a sense of equality based on the notion that all human beings are created by God. These are the basis of what I have called personalism. My view is that although personalism involves the assumptions listed above, the focus is on the fact that each person is unique and that the world is as each person perceives it. The latter means that the Latin American deals with abstract concepts rather than empirical structures, i.e., they deal with universals and not with their physical manifestations.

The Being (El Ser). The Latin American view of human nature contains three basic facets or dimensions. Dignidad and personalism (discussed above) are two of these three. The third facet refers to the components and structure of the human person--"El Ser" or the being.

The Spanish word "ser" when used as a noun is translated as "being" in English; when used as a verb, it is translated as is. In the latter case (as a verb), the concept "is" is more inclusive than "ser." The concept "is" can also be translated as "Estar." This linguistic difference also reflects a difference in the meanings given to the noun "ser"--being--in Spanish.

"Ser" (the verb) is used in Spanish to refer to permanent conditions or traits, while "estar" is used to refer to transitory conditions. Similarly, the noun "ser" (being) is used to refer to that which is permanent in one's existence. One is not only that which is permanent, one also has temporary characteristics or behaviors that do not necessarily reflect what one is. This view of human nature perceives that what is permanent are the components of human nature and the relationship between these components, while the manifestation of these components, may be transitory. If I were to express this idea in the jargon of North American psychology, I would have to say that for the Latin American personality (the permanent) is separable from behavior (the transitory), but such a rendition does violence to the views of the Latin American. The impossibility of translating the Latin American's views of human nature into the jargon of psychology becomes clear if we consider what, in their view, are the components of human nature.

The basic view of human nature held and shared by Latin Americans is derived directly from Catholic theology. For the Latin American, humans are made of flesh and soul. The body and the soul, the profane and the sacred, coexist and are inseparable. Furthermore, the body and the spirit are seen as complimentary. For the Latin American, a person's existential task is to bring about a balance of flesh and soul and reconcile them into a functioning entity. This task is never completed as one may tend to emphasize one aspect over the other. It is this inability to maintain a balance between body and soul that Latin Americans refer to when they say that to be human is to be imperfect.

Interestingly, if one emphasizes the spirit one is called a "saint" but there is no word for those that focus on the body, or flesh, at the expense of the spirit.

In the view of the Latin American, the nurturing and expression of the spirit, soul or the sacred is not limited to religious activities or church-connected situations. Anything creative (poetry, painting, or singing) is in the spiritaul realm and so is suffering. The spiritual at times is congruent with the flesh (the needs of the biological organism, as well as the tendencies that move people away from beauty and virtue), at times in conflict with the flesh, and at times unrelated to the flesh. As stated above, a person's task is not to fight the impulses of the flesh but to reconcile them to those of the spirit so that they are harmonious.

The concept personality cannot be applied with ease to the entity that emerges out of the above discussion. In order to clearly specify why this concept (personality) tends to confuse the issue, we need to briefly discuss the North American view of human nature. In the U.S., the person is not truly seen as both sacred and profane in the sense that the Latin American cultures do. In the U.S., both flesh and spirit are seen as components of human nature, but these two components are seen as locked into a struggle, the outcome of which determines what a person is and consequently his salvation. Personality is the resultant of this struggle and it includes tendencies as well as patterns of reaction to given stimuli or situations. This is, a young adult whose personality has stabilized has achieved a resolution to the conflict. Nonetheless, the conflict is always there, the loser (either flesh or soul) keeps trying to overcome the other, but the assumption is that once a personality is stabilized, the outcome is settled. The person's behavior then becomes predictable and systematic. Within this view, the presence of contradictory intendencies is viewed as "sick."

The existential task for the North American is to maintain the resolution of the conflict unaltered. That is, the task is to continue to "have it together,"

to protect the integrity of the ego (the identity created by the resolution of the conflict). Within the North American culture this means that the flesh must be subdued.

The flesh is seen as the human part of a person while the soul represents God's presence. As the Puritan Ethic suggests, to be human is to be bad or sinful. The flesh is sinful. This means that the existential task also includes transcending one's human condition (the demands of the flesh). That is, not only is the North American required to keep the integrity of the ego but is also required to make the spirit dominant over the body. As Freud suggested (Brown University lectures), the North Americans push for sublimation to the point of denying the basic biological demands of the organism. This, of course, is a result of the conflict view of the person.

In this discussion of existential tasks, reference was made to personality and ego in the context of the North American but not in the context of the Latin American. The concepts personality and ego have built into them the view that conflict leads to a stable resolution of it, which must be maintained. These two concepts are not generally used in Latin America. Ego is hardly a common word; at best, it is known to educated persons but it is not used to refer to one's being. Latin Americans do not talk of "my ego" but rather "my being" ("mi ser") which can be contradictory. Personality is not used by Latin Americans to refer to one's identity or core being. The concept personality as used in everyday life in Latin America refers to style, poise, or if you wish, character or temperament.

One's character need not be a neat integrated package for the Latin American. They tend to expect that people will show inconsistencies which speak of their dual nature. The issue is not to make these consistent but to reconcile them. In the U.S.A., if one fails to integrate one's personality the result is guilt. This result (guilt) also occurs if one is unable to control one's flesh. For the Latin American, failure to reconcile flesh and sould leads to shame. In

fact, one finds that saintly people tend to be apologetic for their lack of worldliness.

Another facet or aspect of the Latin American views is how one relates to pain and suffering. The Latin American sees pain as a part of existence, natural but not necessarily desirable. Pain comes from living. The North American treats pain as a punishment, a "reward" for being sinful. For this reason, there is a tendency to diminish its presence. A good example of this is the response to death and attitudes toward death. The cultural patterns related to death in the U.S.A. are designed to reduce pain, to hide the emotions involved. The Latin American patterns in this area accept that pain will occur and ways have been created to institutionalize the expression of such feelings. The Latin American view of the person also allows for one to be in pain and to be happy. To suffer is not to deny pleasure. In the U.S.A., this duality is incomprehensible. If one is in pain or suffering (in both physical and spiritual ways), one's whole existence is to be viewed in such a light. To do otherwise would be to deny the logic of one's existence.

The Latin American, then, sees human nature as a unity growing out of the co-existence of seemingly contradictory forces. The view that these forces find a balance is one of the cornerstones of the definition of sex roles and the division of labor between these roles.

Success. There is one theme that is not present in Latin America but which needs to be discussed because of its impact on how North Americans perceive Latin Americans. This theme is success. In the U.S.A., success is the ultimate controlling value and goal. In the U.S.A., one's worth is measured ultimately by success--in business, cards, marbles, or sex. If one is not successful, one becomes a loser, an unworthy person. Surely one is not expected to win every time, as the saying goes--win some, lose some; but one ought to be on top often.

One key aspect of this notion is the view that individuals are responsible for the outcomes of their actions. In other words, one's success or lack of it reflects one's personal abilities and personality.

The concept of success as understood in the U.S.A. is ultimately incomprehensible to the Latin American. This is not only because the Latin American culture does not have the necessary components to interpret it but also because the language does not provide for this concept (perhaps the language is affected by the lack of a cultural meaning for the idea). Generally speaking, success is translated into Spanish as "exito," "triunfo," and "suceso." Exito in Spanish is used to indicate that a given activity was a "hit," a success in the sense that others appreciated it. Note that one refers to the activity not the person as being a "hit." The word "triunfo" is used to report that a person or a team has defeated others, i.e., "triunfo" means triumph. This word is always used to refer to the outcome of clearly competitive situations, especially in sports. "Suceso" on the other hand is generally used to mean happening rather than success. Note that in all the cases discussed above, only in one does the Spanish counterpart of success refer to a situation where a person wins. That one case is when one describes the outcome of a competitive situation. Even in that case, one finds that there is no implicit assumption of personal responsibility for the triumph.

One can best understand the gulf between the culture of the U.S.A. and the Latin American cultures if we consider how the Latin Americans describe a person that is rich, is at the top of his/her occupation, has prestige, has a good and wealthy family, etc., i.e., how the Latin Americans refer to a successful person. Such a person is invariably called "una persona afortunada." This phrase translates literally into English as follows: "a person (who is) lucky or (has) good furtune." That is, a successful person is one whom fate has smiled upon and has treated well, and there is no assumption made that such a

person earned that good fortune with his/her behavior. Neither is good fortune seen as the resultant of one's qualities or capabilities. This brings us back to the beginning of our discussion of cultural themes. At that point, it was said that Latin Americans do not see success as reflecting a personal quality or as earned, but rather as a result of the working of fate. It must be noted that the phrase persona afortunada does not suggest a lasting condition but rather one that is true at the present.

That the Latin American sees the outcomes of behavior as separate from one's worth or core-being and more as results of forces beyond personal control is clear in the following two examples. In Spanish, when one wishes to point out that the expected results came out of one's actions, one says "salio bien"--it came out all right, the meaning in Spanish being that one tried and somehow fate worked itself in one's favor. In the U.S.A., one is told that "the early bird gets the worm," while in Latin America "al gue mudruga Dios lo ayuda"--the early riser gets God's help. Notice how the U.S.A. version emphasizes that if one acts in a given way, one obtains certain rewards, while the Latin American version says God will intervene.

Given the success theme in their background, North Americans tend to interpret patterns of behavior in Latin America as emphasizing outcomes and lose, the Latin American emphasis on process and lack of personal responsibility for outcomes of one's behavior. The blind spot created by the success theme has led to serious misinterpretations of the courtship process and the relationship between husband and wife.

In summary, in order to understand the Latin American sex roles one needs to keep in mind that Latin American cultures do not consider humans to control their destiny, that all people are equal internally, that each person views self as the center of the universe, that personal relationships are above any other demands and that a person is both spirit and flesh. We need also to remember

that the Latin American cultures do not value success or interpret it as a result or indicator of personal worth. The Latin American is geared to enjoy the process of living (as it may not last long) rather than the fruits of living.

IV. Sex Roles in Latin America

It is interesting to note that North American social scientists in the early 1950s coined concepts (machismo/virginidad) to refer to Latin American cultural patterns that today are called sex roles. The concept sex role as used today in the U.S.A. refers to the expectations and behaviors that are defined by a person's sex or gender. The concept also covers the general stereotypes of each sex shared by the members of the society. Accordingly, the description of sex roles could cover almost every area of human interaction. For the purposes of this essay, I will limit the discussion to four major areas: A) Essence; B) Courtship and Marriage (including Sexuality); C) Family Structure; and D) Work and Career.

A. Essence. As noted above, the cultural definition of sex roles includes a stereotypical description of each of the gender and it is this description which I am referring to as the essence of the sex roles. The label essence also covers the general tone and character of the sex roles, as well as abstract guidelines and expectations for behavior. One of the key functions of the pattern of beliefs that I call the essence of sex roles is to explain the differences that exist between men and women.

In the case of Latin America, personalism reduces the pressure or need to generate a clear distinction between males and females. As everybody is different from everybody else, it is only natural that males and females be different. The function of the sex roles is not to explain the differences but to identify them. The Spanish language further facilitates the perception that differences in gender are natural as it provides for classifying everything easily by gender. Objects as well as living things have "gender," e.g., shirt =

camisa, stick = palo. The "a" ending reflects feminine words and the "o" ending masculine words. Not only are nouns reflective of gender but articles and adjectives are declined by gender. These characteristics of the Spanish language also makes the contributions of females or their involvement in given areas easily recognizable. That is, the language does not preclude women from entering specific areas of activity by fiat.

The Spanish language allows for the recognition that women exist. The forced declinations of articles and adjectives suggest that women and men are equivalent and that gender implies differences. That is, this characteristic of the Spanish language presents women as worthy as men but at the same time as different. The ultimate consequences of gender differentiation in the language is the acceptance that differences in gender are natural and that one needs to adjust to them.

Given that sex differences are viewed by Latin Americans as natural, there is no overall sense that one is superior to the other. This, in turn, allows men and women to be viewed as partners, each with different functions and responsibilities. Male and female then comprise a whole. The roles of the male and the female are seen as complementary, as well as reciprocal. There is no sense of competition, or struggle for power. This is made manifest by the absence of the idea that there is a "battle of the sexes."

The complementary view of the sexes can endure because for each sex positions and corresponding statuses are clearly defined. Furthermore, the positions defined for a given sex are not uniformly low or high. That is, in a given situation the position and status of a man is hig , another is low, and still in another equality is granted. This is quite different from the situation in the U.S.A. where the woman's roles are not always clearly defined and when positions are defined, the corresponding statuses are invariably low. The housewife role as defined in the U.S.A. denies the woman access to the key

component of identity and self-worth in the U.S.A.--career. As an occupation, housewife consists of a series of menial (unskilled) jobs. Hence, women who stay home do not enjoy high status. In Latin America, the situation is different in various ways. The housewife role is highly valued and does not deny access to the means to define one's identity.

In Latin America, the sex roles start from the assumption that whether one is male or female, one is a human being. Self-image or identity focuses on this notion. The notion of being human implies that one is equal to others (at least inasmuch as one shares in the human condition) and that one has an inherent dignidad. Inasmuch as this is a given, identity is not dependent on external factors like success, popularity, or the opinions of others. These external factors are only important for status, but status is not related to identity because one has no control over one's status. Fate controls status.

In the U.S.A., status is tied to success which is viewed as an indicator of one's worth. Accordingly, identity in this society is tied to success, career or vocation and status. Therefore, as long as women are denied access to careers where they can show their worth, women will have identities that involve depreciation of self.

The Latin American female, much like the male, can perceive herself as worthy because she is human. That is, one's worth is not dependent on position or status or personal accomplishments.

In Latin America, differences between individuals are not viewed as emanating out of one's intrinsic worth. One starts by assuming that everyone is equally worthy, but some people may rise above the level of animals and others may descend to the level of animals. The latter are those who have no dignidad, the shameless ones (sin verguenza). The former are the heroes.

Latin Americans are asked to have a commitment in life, something that they cherish and pursue above all. This demand acts as a counterbalance for the

view that fate controls life. That is, one is not to simply live in such a way that fate will be allowed to run one's life. One is expected to put up a fight, to struggle with fate. This means that one must or needs to do all that one can do to change fate, at least in one's area of commitment even if one knows that such efforts will be futile. This applies to both males and females.

Every person is supposed to struggle for what they believe in, but no one is asked to go beyond making a good faith effort to conquer fate. Those that go beyond a good faith effort and are willing to sacrifice everything else, including their lives, are the heroes. The hero in Latin America is the person who does everything they can irrespective of the potential outcomes or odds in order to work toward a goal that they have committed themselves to. The more overwhelming the odds against changing fate, the more one is respected for attempting to overturn fate. The true Latin American hero is the person who proceeds even in the certainty that his/her actions will fail to change the outcome. Utlimately, the outcome of a true heroic action is "failure" in the practical sense and victory in the moral sense. Victory in the sense that one was not overwhelmed by fate, that one stood and fought fate even when defeat was certain.

In the U.S.A., the hero is one who overcomes the odds--a winner. The so-called Horatio Alger myth (rags to riches by one's efforts) is the best example of the stereotype of the North American hero. Those that lost are considered valiant but not necessarily heroes. The hero in the U.S.A. is a person who overcomes the external world and gains some control over it. Accordingly, the North American hero in the end has power over things, events, and/or people.

In Latin America, the overall quality of the hero is not viewed as valor or courage but integrity. Heroines are seen capable of reaching a more exalted level yet: purity. This purity is spiritual in nature.

As noted above, the existential task of the Latin American is to reconcile body and spirit--flesh and soul. This means that all Latin Americans are expected

to satisfy the demands of both parts of their being and not allow one to get in the way of the other. When possible, it is expected that the needs of both parts would be met through a given set of action. That is, one's behavior is viewed as meeting both kinds of needs at the same time.

Men are assumed to give more emphasis to the demands of the flesh and women more emphasis to the demands of the spirit. Women are perceived as being better equipped to deal with spiritual things than men, i.e., women are granted spiritual superiority. This difference between males and females is expressed in two patterns of belief and behavior.

In the religious area, women are generally more devout than men which is explained as a resultant of this spiritual superiority of women. Since men tend to focus on the flesh, Latin Americans are not surprised to find an agnostic or at least anticlerical streak in the men. The anticlericalism of these men is ultimately based on suspicion of the purity of the priests. The Latin American men perceive the priest as a man, hence weak in the spiritual realm, who at any time will have to give in to the flesh. Conversely, Latin American men have more trust in nuns as they consider them capable of the denial of their flesh.

As women are capable of more complete satisfaction of their spiritual needs and keeping the balance between body/soul easier than men, the ultimate picture of them differs from that of the men. Women are seen as capable of enduring pain better than men and capable of being resigned to their fate without giving in. That is, women are seen as enduring, suffering and resigned. The model of the female is none other than the Virgin Mary, hence the label Marianismo used by Stevens and others. Like the Virgin, the females suffer. Their suffering is a mark of strength. This suffering and enduring need not be silent. Women are expected to and generally will express how much they suffer. This expression of suffering by females is descriptive and does not involve complaints or regrets. The absence of complaints is the keynote of their capacity for endurance.

Males, on the other hand, cannot absorb as much suffering as females. Therefore, males are prone to complain about their misfortunes. Males are more likely than females to evade fate, to try to bypass it because of their inability to endure pain. This is different than resisting fate because one is committed to a goal. In the latter case, one opens oneself to pain and suffering and will endure it without complaints. Evasion of fate may involve magic, promesas, and resort to alcohol or drugs. Drinking is viewed by Latin Americans as a sign of spiritual weakness. The classic example is the man who is refused by the woman he loves and tries to drown his sorrow in liquor. The image is that men resort to liquor as an escape, as a way to hide from reality. By contrast, women are said not to need liquor because they are strong emotionally and spiritually.

Women are also seen as more capable than men of reconciling body and spirit. This ability allows their behavior to be stable and predictable. Women generally are going to react in similar ways to given stimuli. Men, on the other hand, being unable to balance body and spirit, will react to given stimuli from either extreme (flesh or soul). In one situation, they will be compassionate, in the same situation at a different time, they might be violent. The classic example of this difference is the manner in which parents may react to a given behavior of one of their children. Mothers will react basically in the same manner if an unacceptable behavior is repeated. Fathers on one occasion may scold or make their dissatisfaction known and on another occasion may respond with monumental wrath and very stringent punishment. In a sense, the instability and unpredictability of the male parallels that of God.

Latin American males, besides being unpredictable and unstable, are considered to be highly emotional. As some commentators have pointed out, emotions run very high in Latin America. This is generally pointed out with the phrase that Latin Americans are hot blooded. Latin American males are said to be driven to monumental anger by little things. To say that they are short-fused or

hot-blooded is to beg the question. In my view, anger is a secondary emotion that is nothing more than a symptom for other feelings. In the case of the Latin American anger, it is a symptom of the inability to deal with suffering, a sense of insecurity generated by their inability to bring flesh and soul into balance and their sense of impotency in the face of fate. Accordingly, anger is objectivized; i.e., directed at objects. As noted above, the person is not responsible for their fate, and at times, the language allows to blame mishaps on inanimate objects; therefore, men will vent their anger on the objects that they perceive as responsible. Rarely does one find a Latin American angry at self. Another peculiarity of male anger is that when someone hurts a loved one, the immediate response is a physical attack in anger. When the object of anger is another person, the results are generally disastrous.

Women, because of their ability to balance body and soul, are rarely brought to anger and only in exceptional cases do they express their anger violently. Nonetheless, a woman in anger is beyond control and men tend to scatter in the presence of an angry woman.

If men are more expressive in anger, they are also more expressive in love. A man in love will not cease to express his feelings to the object of his feelings. Not only is the expression constant and elaborate, but men will quickly enshrine the women they love. Women, on their part, tend to be aloof and only grudgingly will they express their love for a man. As it will be noted later on, a man and a woman may marry without an outright verbal expression of love from the woman. On the other hand, men's feelings may change quicker than the females'. This, of course, is another expression of the difference in stability discussed above.

All in all, men in Latin America are viewed as more emotional than females. There are no clear restrictions on the expression of feelings in either sex but women seem to be less expressive than men except in one area. When it comes to dealing with male children, women are much more expressive than men.

By contrast, in the U.S.A. males are assumed to be less emotional and in practice, North American males do not express their emotions. North American women are seen as incapable of restraining their emotions.

In the area of parent-child relationships, we find that the mother is expected to be devoted to her male children, even more than to her husband. Sons correspondingly are expected to be devoted to their mothers, even more than to their wives. These views, in practice, tie the male to his mother in a dependent relationship. Mothers rarely renounce their primacy and expect obedience (even if the "child" is married and has a family of his own).

In summary, the image held by Latin Americans of the essence of the male is emotional, earthly, and polite (courteous), and of the female as controlled, spiritual, and assertive. These two capsule views will be expanded below as I discuss other aspects and implications of the definition of sex roles that exist in Latin America.

B. Sexuality, Courtship and Marriage

One of the basic components of sex roles in any society is the whole area of contacts between male and female. In Latin America, the perceptions, values, and rules governing the interaction between the sexes are directed at or focused on the process of mate selection. The patterns of courtship then contain within themselves the basic guidelines and perceptions of interactions between male and female. The patterns of courtship include views on sexuality, specific images and stereotypes of the sexes, and the rules, expectations and standards utilized in the selection of a mate. These elements of the patterns of courtship are keyed to or derived from the view of what is the essence of each sex and the overall cultural themes discussed above.

The elements of the patterns of courtship form almost a logical progression. The views on sexuality determine the basic content of the specific images and stereotypes. The latter sets the limit for criteria, which in turn defines the

the actual pattern of behavior that people engage in to select mates. I will follow this almost logical structure in discussing these patterns.

1. Sexuality. In Latin America, one can use the concepts sexuality and sensuality almost interchangeably. The idea of sexual activities is not limited to coitus. It involves almost any form of interaction between people of different sexes that produces sensual pleasure. Watching the undulating walk of a female, hearing the caressing tones of a voice, feeling the skin of the other person as one slowly caresses it (and feeling the caress), kissing, feeling the admiring looks of members of the opposite sex, holding or being held close by one's dancing partner, are considered definitely to be sensual pleasures. Sexuality, then, does not focus on the reproductive organs but rather on pleasure generated by a person of the opposite sex. Such pleasure by itself can be considered satisfactory without need to reach coitus in order to feel satisfied.

In general, Latin Americans consider sensuality, including sexual intercourse, as a natural activity. As such, it is a legitimate subject of conversation, but only in the abstract. That is, one's own sensual experiences are private and therefore one refrains from relating them in public. Inasmuch as family is not public, if you were to be admitted into the bosom of a Latin American family, you would find that sometimes references are made among themselves about the level of indulgence (frequency and quality) of the married members of the family. Such conversations are no different than others and generally take a bantering tone. In a typical case, if a person is acting grouchy, the question might be asked if they are "getting enough." Another example would be a couple who are kissing and caressing that would be asked if they are insatiable. Such comments may lead to a general bantering. To witness such interchanges makes it patently clear that sexual intercourse and sensuality are not considered dirty or evil by and in themselves.

According to Latin Americans, sensual pleasure like any other activity can become dirty and sinful. In their view, greed and excesses will convert what is natural into evil or sin. Sexual activities are not exempted from this dictum. In the case of sex, misuse can also convert the natural into sin. One's motives and purposes in getting involved in sexual activities can make what is wholesome into an ugly, dirty business. Specifically, Latin Americans consider the seeking of sensual pleasure for its own sake as not proper. When sensual pleasure is sought separate from spiritual satisfaction it is said that sensuality has been corrupted.

Given the Catholic ethic prevalent in Latin America, sexual activity is seen in those cultures as having both a carnal and a spiritual side to it. The carnal focus on the physical pleasure derived from the activity. The spiritual focus on the meeting of two souls becoming one, i.e., sex is the ultimate consumation of the union between the two persons. Sex is also seen as related to procreation, which according to the Catholic ethic, is its ultimate purpose. The relationship of sex to procreation goes beyond the spiritual and reflects on the ultimate being, the essence of the person. As we shall see below, in Latin America procreation becomes a key to sexual identity.

Within the framework of the Catholic ethic and the cultural demand for balancing body and soul, sexual activities are corrupted when one focuses only on the carnal side of it. Furthermore, within the logic of the Catholic ethic and Latin American cultural patterns, it is assumed that given pleasure one will be tempted to focus on its carnal or flesh aspect rather than keep it in the perspective of its ties to the soul. That is, there is also a natural, human tendency to seek repented satisfaction and to separate this satisfaction from its spiritual meaning.

As noted above, men according to the Latin American view have a difficult time bringing into balance the body and the soul. It is not rare for them that

the soul is overwhelmed by the body. Therefore, it is not strange that men tend to focus on the carnal aspects of sex. In most of their intimate interactions with females they will tend to seek pleasure rather than the union of body and soul. Although this is not viewed as evil, it is viewed as not proper or as unfortunate.

Before I proceed to consider in detail the differences between males and females in their approach to sexuality, I must mention the Latin American views on the issue of sex appeal or excitement. To be sensual in Latin America is to be oriented toward sensual pleasure, to seek it, not necessarily to be the source of it. In Latin America there is no easy way to say that one has sex appeal. Sexual excitement is not seen as created by external factors, but rather by the frame of mind of the person being excited (the subject). A person may be attractive or engaging [simpatico(s)], but not sexy. Sexiness is in the eye of the beholder. Desire is self-generated rather than incited by the object of one's desire. In short to be sensual is not to be able to excite others, but to be excitable.

The view that sensual excitement is generated within the person being excited allows for the view that one can be attractive, and the object of desire and at the same time innocent and pure. This notion of sensuality allows for any characteristic to be sexually appealing because the key to excitement is in the subject not the "object." Given this view in Latin America socialization stresses how to deal with one's reactions to others, rather than with the other's reactions to one.

As a young boy grows up, given his inclination toward the flesh, he will become quickly aware of the pleasurable side of genital manipulation and physical contact. This awareness of this sexual drive will lead him to seek information. Such information is readily available from older brothers and friends. The obtainment of relevent information given this inclination to favor the flesh

will lead him to want to experiment. Indulgence will show how pleasurable it is to satisfy one's sexual desires and lead to wishes to continue indulging in the satisfaction of sexual desires. In time such wishes become a sort of physical need. Given the spiritual weakness of males it is understandable that they will continue to seek sensual pleasure for its own sake. Because of this weakness there is not real effort made to curb the emergence of desire in the male, but controls are set for its expression. In the first place males are taught that females are to be respected, especially if they are pure. Second, one does not take advantage of females. Third, to be too forward with a female may lead to the end of the relationship. The last control to be mentioned here is purely external: not to curb the expression of his desires may lead to physical violence from the relatives of the female.

Females, inasmuch as they are capable of balancing body and soul, by contrast will tend to focus on the interplay between the carnal and spiritual aspects of sexuality and will , in many cases, zero in on its reproductive function. Young girls learn that sexual matters relate to the union of two persons. In general, females then are not interested in knowing about the carnal pleasure associated with sex. Accordingly, virgins are assumed not to be interested in knowing about sex, or of being specifically aware of their sexual drive. In the sense that sexually inexperienced (virgin) females are not specifically conscious of the carnal side of sex, they are said to be innocent or naive about sexual matters. Females do not learn how to curb their sexual desires, because they are in a sense dormant.

Once a female experiences sensual pleasure, she will become aware of its carnal aspect. As a female experiences different kinds of sensual pleasures she will wish to continue indulging in them. The female is not taught to manage such wishes as her natural ability to balance body and soul should allow her to keep her desires within the realm of what is considered acceptable behavior.

Nonetheless, it is assumed that under certain conditions the female will focus, much like the male, on the carnal aspects of sensual pleasure. I will limit my discussion of these exceptions to the experience of coitus, but it should be noted that the logic applies to all other sensual pleasures.

If a woman's first experience with sexual intercourse is with her husband, she will experience the carnal pleasure. As such experience is within the context of marriage, where male and female are supposed to become one, the married female will enjoy sex and want more, but mostly in terms of its meaning as the unity between two persons. This does not mean that the carnal aspect is not important for the female, but it is secondary to the becoming one with her husband and its procreative function. What this means is that the female will seek to limit the satisfaction of her sexual desires through her relationship with her husband. This of course is reinforced by the view that marriage is a blessed or sanctified status. In the Latin American view marriage is the only situation in which two persons can truly become one. Sexual activity outside of marriage is by definition devoid of its spiritual meaning.

The idea that sex out of the marriage bond is devoid of its spiritual meaning is the basis for the notion that sexually inexperienced (virgin) females are easily corrupted. If a female's first experience with sexual intercourse is outside of the marriage bond, it may lead her to focus on its carnal aspect. If a female is tricked into sexual intercourse in a situation where the action is devoid of its spiritual meaning, her natural ability to balance body and soul will be overridden. The carnal pleasure without its balancing spiritual aspect allows the natural balance to be negated. As the female is not trained to control her desires beyond her "natural" abilities, then she will become truly corrupted.

Within marriage there is a parallel to the corrupting side of sexual intercourse. The parallel is in situations where the man cannot satisy the sexual

needs of the wife or vice versa, or when the marriage does not provide for the union of male and female into one person. That is, if a woman and her husband somehow do not manage to become a unit then the female will become also a seeker of sexual pleasure. The implications of this view will be considered in some detail later on.

In short, the existing Latin American views on sexuality lead one to view men as seeking sexual pleasure in their interactions with females, while women are viewed as mostly interested in marriage. Since virgin females are viewed as innocent and corruptible in the area of sexual intercourse, they must be protected from the pleasure seeking males. Interestingly enough there is also the notion that young males need to be protected from exeperienced females (divorcees and other females known to be sexually active outside of marriage) who might create problematic situations for them.

In spite of these views sexuality is viewed as normal and healthy. Social controls are created, and patterns of behavior are generated to ensure that the expression of sensuality is not corrupted.

2. Images and stereotypes. The attitudes toward sexuality and the emerging picture of how males and females respond to it specify a set of expectations for each sex. In this section I will consider these expectations and how they are specified for different types of males and females.

As previously mentioned, males are expected to be oriented toward carnal satisfaction. Therefore, females and their parents distrust any male who approaches them (the females). The male is assumed to be seeking pleasure and not to be interested in marriage. It is the responsibility of the male to convince the female that his intentions are honorable (he intends to marry her). If a male has honorable intentions, he will treat the female with respect and not pressure her to have intercourse.

Generally, it is assumed that males are considered to be liars. That is, they will promise marriage when they do not intend to marry in order to obtain sensual pleasure of a female. In this view, the female is assumed to be innocent and corruptible. I have obtained evidence that males do believe that this picture is accurate, but females do not. In conversation with various lawyers who have handled cases of breech of promise which are brought to trial as seduction, I was told that male jurors are willing to accept the view that a female surrendered her virginity because she was promised matrimony. Female jurors judging the same case would discount the female contention because in the view of the female jurors, a woman surrenders not because of a promise, but because she wants to.

Although males are willing to view females as innocent, they still deal with them cautiously as they are suspicious. The men believe that females are seeking a husband. In their search for pleasure they do not want to be trapped by the wrong kind of female.

The preceeding discussion of the assumed intentions and motivations of males and females subbests that Latin Americans assume that there are different kinds of males and females. These differences are assumed to be tied to differences in the people's ability to balance body and soul. These differences in ability are translated into different patterns of behavior. The typologies to be discussed below describe these differential patterns of behavior. The typologies also serve as a means of social control.

In Latin America females are divided into two major categories: sacrade (or untouchable) and "profane" (or available for conquest). Sacred women are those females that are unavailable to a man sexually. The first woman in the list of sacred females is one's mother, then comes one's sisters, cousins, and the mothers and sisters of one's close friends. The female relatives in the list represent the "incest" type relationship. The female relatives of friends are included in the list of sacred, but this does not preclude one getting to

love them and offering to marry them. The inclusion of them in this list simply means that one is not to look toward one's friends female relatives as simply sources of carnal pleasure. One must relate to them on the spiritual, sacred level which involves marriage. To approach one's friend's female relatives with the goal of obtaining carnal pleasure from them is considered to be an insult to the females, to the friend, and to their whole family. Friendship demands that such insults not be made.

The females in the sacred list are to be treated with utmost respect at all times. This means that one does not make advances and also that one does not make references to them as potential sexual outlets. One is to even refrain from praising their physical beauty for fear that such expression may be interpreted as desire or construed as an insult.

If the sacred females are due respect and reticence in dealing with them, the "profane" females are due adulation and praise, especially for their physical beauty. As some observers point out it seems as if the Latin American male feels obligated to clearly express this admiration for all "available" (profane) females. In general, Latin Americans believe that each female has some characteristic that is worthy of adulation and celebration. Females for their part expect to be so praised; and although explicity indifferent if they receive no adulation, they feel disappointed. I will discuss this in more detail when I consider the actual patterns of courtship. At his point I simply want to point out that men publicly express their appreciation of "profane" females, and these in turn expect such appreciation. This process of expressing appreciation is used by males to determine which females might be ready sources of sexual gratification.

All "profane" females are considered potential sources of sexual gratification, but not all are viewed as available for such purposes. Latin Americans classify the non-sacred females into three groups or types: 1. "Good," 2. "Loose" and 3. " Perdidas" (lost or bad). The "good" (pure) females are those who see

sex as part of the sacrament of marriage and, therefore, do not seek sexual gratification for its own sake. The loose female views sex from the fleshly point of view, i.e., as carnal pleasure. The "Perdida" not only sees sex as carnal, but has lost her sense of order, i.e., has become debased either by excesses or by becoming a prostitute.

As suggested above, the good women are those who consider sex as part of the actualization of the union between male and female. This does not mean that they disdain sexual gratification, but see it only as a by-product of a deeper relationship. The prototye of the good woman is the sexually inexperienced (virgin) female. This female considers that the desirable goal of any relationship with the opposite sex is marriage, i.e., a good woman is seeking a husband. As mentioned above, this women is supposed to lack specific knowledge of sexual matters and will not allow any male to take liberties with her person. In other words, the good woman will not engage in necking or petting. In order to ensure that males will not take advantage of their innocence, good women are accompanied by a chaperone when going out with a male or going out in groups. It must be noted that good females avail themselves of the protection provided by the chaperone.

Males generally avoid good women when seeking pleasure, as these women are only interested in marriage. A man would only pursue a good woman when he is interested in marriage with her. To court a good woman in order to satisfy one's sexual desires can easily lead to marriage.

Females that are married or committed to a man are rated as good women and also considered unavailable to other males. This is so because of practical reasons. As mentioned, to approach a female for the purpose of satisfying one's carnal desires is viewed as an insult to the female. This is especially so if the woman is rated as a good woman. In the case of women committed to a man or married any approach made to the woman is also considered an insult to the man she is committed to or married to. Such insults will bring one into conflict with

the man. Latin American males learn early in their lives that women committed to other men are to be left alone. In the first place, such women (especially married women) are loyal to their husbands (as noted above) and, therefore, it would be a waste of time to chase them. Secondly, as noted above the males they are committed to will consider one's intervention as an insult and will respond violently.

Latin American males are also aware that some married women are not loyal to their husbands. These are generally the women whose marriage are a "sham" either because their husbands cannot, or would not, satisfy their sexual needs or females for whom marriage is not a true union of two persons into one. These kinds of woman will somehow advertise their availability. They can do it in the way they respond to the "expected" adulation or by directly making known their availability. Married women that so advertise their availability are then treated as loose women.

The distinguishing characteristic of a loose female is that she enjoys physical intimacies with males for the sake of the pleasure they derive from such intimacies. It must be noted that is not the intimacies or the pleasure per se that makes them loose, but their willingness to allow different men to be intimate without the thought of marriage. One clear indicator that a female is loose is her willingness to go out with a male along, i.e., without a chaperone.

Loose women are supposed to be aware of the pleasures of the flesh and ready to enjoy them. Generally speaking, one expects loose women to be females who lost their virginity and now cannot live without sexual satisfaction. In this sense the prototype of the loose woman is the divorcee. Nonetheless, there are loose women who seem to allow intimacies short of intercourse, i.e., who are still virgins. These are generally young females who go out with a series of males and neck and pet.

Generally, in Latin America when a man takes the virginity of a female he is expected to restore her virtue by marrying her. If the female is one who is considered a loose female the man need not feel obligated to marry her. In the latter case, it is assumed that the female was seeking pleasure as was the man, i.e., she was not an innocent victim; she knew what she was doing.

Due to the demand that a man who takes the virginity of a woman marry her, Latin American males are not too insistent to have intercourse even when faced with a loose female. To be denied sexual intercourse does not seem to cause ego damage to the Latin American male. As noted elsewhere,, they are trained to check all females and to expect to be rejected or ignored by most. The lack of ego damage is also a resultant of their belief in fate, i.e., a refusal simply means that this woman was not meant for me. In addition, intercourse or conquest per se is not related to the male identity. To fail with one woman does not mean in the Latin American male's mind that he is not a man, even if the female is loose. Male identity is set by one's capacity to reproduce and that can only happen within marriage. Finally, the Latin American has learned to enjoy the process and not the end. That is, in the sexual area, the chase by itself is exciting and intercourse nice as it is may have a dear price--marriage. As one young man expressed it to me--"so I was turned down. There are more females to pursue. Why waste time sulking."

The foregoing discussion suggests that men are afraid of marriage, and when ready to marry will want to marry a good woman, not just a virgin. This suggests that a loose women, even if virgin, will have some difficulty in getting married. Loose females have various alternatives open to them. One is to "repent" and begin to act like a good woman, covering up for her past. This is easily done if her family relocates. Another alternative is to "hook" a man, that is, to get him in love with her so deeply that he will forgive her past and marry her.

In any case, a woman who is a non-virgin must be careful because a man may overlook her lack of virginity, but will not overlook deceit.

Men are cautioned about the possibility of being fooled by loose females in many ways. One of the most graphic is by way of "blue" jokes. For example, most Puerto Rican "blue" jokes that have no political overtones make references to the efforts of non-virgin brides to cover-up their lack of virginity. These jokes clearly make the male the butt of it, making him look like a fool. That is, the stress is not to demand virginity, but honesty. It might be alright to marry a non-virgin, but is not acceptable to be taken for a fool.

In short, a non-virgin who is repentent or can clearly argue she was a victim of a "bandit" (a worthless man) can find a husband if she is honest about her past. Such honesty is kind of a double-edged knife because it may lead the man to demand equal treatment without commitments. The key then is in timing. The woman needs to wait for the man to be in love with her before she confesses her past.

The third type of female the "perdida" is generally viewed to be a loose female who has sunk so low that she is beyond redemption. These are women who expressly seek sexual gratification, who purposely break marriages, who engage in what one would classify as kinky sex, and who sell their bodies. The prototype of the "perdida" is the prostitute. Being a prostitute means the female is "perdida" but does not mean she is evil. The other sub-types of "perdidas" are viewed also as evil persons. The prototype of the perdida that is evil is the married woman who clearly displays her adultery. Her evil nature consists of her disregard for others. Interestingly enough, a man that remains with such women loses his dignity and in a sense plumets to her level.

Generally speaking, a "perdida" has no hope for marriage or dignity. She has gotten to a purely animal level. Most perdidas live in consensual marriages with pimps or other men who themselves are "perdidos."

Throughout the foregoing discussion of types of females, I have stressed the passivity of females. Ideally, the man is the initiator of relationships, but this does not mean that women are viewed as simply passive recipients of the addresses of men. As I will discuss in detail below, there are ways in which a woman can encourage a man to court her, without stepping out of the mold of a good woman.

Although hardly any student of Latin American societies notes it, Latin Americans have a classificatory scheme for males that parallels the one for females outlines above. In the first place there are the unavailable males, who include relatives and married men. The latter are not only unavailable, but unthinkable as sexual objects because to encourage them is direct evidence of one's looseness or even evil nature. This injunction clearly makes the woman responsible for her purity and presents the male as weak.

The rest of the males are classified as "serios" (serious, responsible), irresponsible, "perdidos" (lost) and sinverguenza" (shameless, evil). "Un hombre serio"--a responsible male--is a man of integrity who respects the purity of females. When he approaches a female he does it with respect and only makes advances if he has "good intention," i.e., only if he has marriage in mind. Nonetheless, he will not refuse an opportunity to enjoy sexual pleasure from a clearly loose female. Another characteristic of this type of man is that he discharges his responsibilities to the best of his abilities. Such a man can be counted on. When he takes a wife, he will be sure to provide for her. Furthermore, he is a good son, and will take care of his mother if she is in need.

The irresponsible male by contrast fails to meet his filial responsibilities and if married does not provide for his family. This kind of male cannot be counted on to meet his commitments. Generally, he will be absent from work, be late to appointments, squander his earnings, and set the satisfaction of his impulses above meeting his duties or responsibilities. This is the man who will offer to

pay for everybody's drinks, but will limit what his wife receives to buy food. The irresponsible male rarely seeks marriage. He will usually be forced into it. His interactions with females are directed at satisfying his carnal desires. The above list of characteristics are the potential areas of irresponsibility. The irresponsible male generally reflects only one or two of these areas. A man that has all these characteristics is as low as a "sinverguenza."

The "perdido" (the lost, unredeemable) is pretty much a match for the "perdida." He will tend to be a womanizer and/or a drunkard. In some instances chronic gamblers are also labelled perdidos, but generally the chronic gambler fits better the patter of irresponsible. The perdido is always seeking carnal pleasure or drinking himself to oblivion, or both. Drink and sexual pleasure are vices for him, i.e., he takes them to excess. In almost every case the perdido has no steady job nor is he able to function inside everday society. He has no self-respect and is ashamed of himself. He has no honor, no commitment in life. His sense of shame leads him to isolate himself from friends and family. He lives a living death. According to existing stereotypical views men are sent to this living death by unrequited love or the perfidy of his wife or loved one. The "perdido" is the weak man, unable to deal with pain, who chooses to bury himself in a life of dissipation. In a sense the perdido is a human wreck who deserves to be pitied.

The "sirvenguenza" (shameless) is the true scum of the male gender according to Latin Americans. In contrast with the "perdido," the sirvenguenza can function and will function in everyday life. Where the perdido is lost in vice, the sirverguenza exudes evil. The perdido drinks and his sexual relations are with perdidas; the sinverguenza may or may not drink, but will seduce innocent virgins and ruthlessly abandon them to become perdidas. That is, the perdido interacts with perdidas, while the "sinverguenza" converts good women into perdidas.

The "sinverguenze" is cruel, unfeeling and exploits others. Above everything else the "sinverguenza" is not ashamed of himself. He sees nothing wrong

with his behavior. He is fighting and surviving and that is all that counts.

The label "sinverguenza" is sometimes used in a restrictive manner to refer to a person that is totally irresponsible, i.e., who is responsible in all areas. Some Latin Americans will use the label in still a more restrictive way to refer to men who do not care for anybody but themselves, to those who are unconcerned with their families, who will not provide for their children or their parents.

If men reject loose woman and "perdidas,, women will reject irresponsible men, "perdidos" and "sinverguenzas." Women are trained to avoid such men and to seek serious and responsible males. The latter will offer marriage; the former will only seek pleasure an/or bring heartache. The key factor in judging a man is his ability and willingness to provide for the family.

3. Differential standards. The typologies of males and females presented above suggest that the genders are evaluated according to different standards. Women are judged in terms of sexual purity while males are judged in terms of their capacity to or willingness to provide for a family. Virginity for the bride is stressed, and, according to some observers, demanded; while males are allowed to engage in sexual activities prior to marriage with no negative sanctions being imposed.

Most North American observers consider these differences to constitute a double standard. In their view, the Latin American women are, therefore, treated unjustly. Latin Americans would disagree with such a conclusion. There is no equality in standards, true; but would not it follow that if males and females are different, one would except different things from them? If that is the case then, would continue the Latin American's response, it would not be just to use the same criteria to judge if males and females are living up to what is expected of them. In other words from the Latin American point of view the issue is not one of equality, but one of equity. From this point of view, it is perfectly

just to have different standards provided that the demands made of individuals be roughly similar in severity, and that the level of compliance required and stringency of application be the same. In my view this issue needs to be clarified in order to justify my criticism of the North American male observers.

As noted above females are assumed to be superior in terms of ability to balance body and soul. Therefore, it is not out of line to expect more out of them in areas of behavior affected by this ability. On the other hand, although men are assumed to be less able to resist the call of the flesh, they are not given "carte-blanche" in this area. A male that focuses solely on the carnal will find it difficult to marry a truly good woman. Furthermore, such males are also rated roughly on the same level with loose females.

One specific claim made to show the existence of a double-standard is that women are required to be virgin at the time of marriage, while men are not. The point in this area is that emphasis is not on virginity, but on integrity. In a general sense women are assumed to be exchanging loyalty and purity for life-long support. As noted, in many cases males will accept a non-virgin female if made aware of the fact. The real issue arises when a woman claims to be or acts as if she were a virgin. In that case the sense of insult does not arise from the lack of virginity, but from deceit. In fact, Latin American males consider deceit worse than non-virginity. In practice the pressure for virginity generally is made by the female's family. To ensure a virgin bride will increase the chances of an advantageous marriage.

An advantageous marriage implies a man who can provide for the female, who is responsible and who is not inclined to vices. In a sense then the female family also requires that the male be morally upright, and will not condone misbehavior from him either.

In the area of sexual expectations, it must also be noted that the sexual identity of both males and females is determined by fertility. A man's virility

is judged by his ability to procreate and so is a woman's femininity. Interestingly, if there is no issue from a marriage, it is the male's capacity to procreate that is doubted and not the female's.

The male is expected to provide for and protect his wife. The wife, in turn, is expected to keep the house and raise the children. The contributions of each (as I will discuss later on) are seen as equivalent. The woman is expected to respect and follow her husband. The man is to respect and enshrine his wife. As we shall see below in the marriage situation both husband and wife are supposed to have areas of decisions independent of the other, as well as some shared ones. In practice the female tends to have more independence in decision making than the man. (This conclusion will be discussed in detail in the section devoted to family structure.)

In summary expectations of both sexes are either similar within a given area or reciprocal. In the area of sex, men are allowed more deviations than women, but it is a matter of degree. In the area of support and household structures, the male is held to expectations more openly than the female. In my view, there is a balance between expectations and enforcement of rules. One final point to consider is that there are no negative stereotypes of either sex; but if one considers that Latin Americans value ability to balance body and soul, then females tend to be viewed somewhat more positively than males. In other words, if there is a double standard, it favors the female. In my view what we have is a set of differential standards that aim at equity.

4. Criteria for Selection. In order to be able to make understandable the patterns of courtship to be described below, it is necessary to specify the criteria used by Latin Americans to select their mates. This discussion will also shed additional light on the issue of differential standards.

The criteria used in the selection of mates in Latin America, as is the case in any other part of the world, involves a number of related factors. Some

of these factors are directly related, in a rational way, to the task of choosing a mate but others are not. In practice, some factors enter into the process simultaneously, others have their time and function clearly defined. In the paragraphs that follow, I will try to identify the basic criteria used in Latin America. I will try to discuss them in the apparent chronological order in which they are activated. The task of identifying and analyzing these factors has not been an easy one as, to my knowledge, there is no systematic research done on this specific subject in Latin America. The analysis that follows is based on data collected by me for other purposes (including participant observation data), comments made by other observers, and research reports on various related subjects, eg., marriage, family, class structure, social mobility, etc.

I have been able to determine that the following factors are involved in the selection of a mate in Latin America: physical appearance, temperament, economic capacities (present and potential), and social status. Physical appearance seems to be the initial factor utilized. All sources point to the fact that in the process of selecting a mate, physical attraction is the first criteria. That is, if one is attracted to another person, that person becomes an eligible party.

Physical attraction has to be placed in first place (chronologically) because as we shall see below, the pattern of relationships between males and females is such that physical appearance is the available guide to classify potential mates into acceptable or non-acceptable. Latin Americans do not have an explicit agreed upon definition of what are desirable or exciting physical characteristics. The range of variation is very large because of the notion that sexual excitement is not generated by an external force but rather by the constitution of the person being excited--the beholder. Nonetheless, there are some general patterns or trends, some physical characteristics and/or types viewed as attractive by many Latin Americans.

Females seem to focus on facial characteristics. Some women are excited over the general structure of the eyes, others are excited over specific aspects of the eyes--color, lashes, eyebrows, eye movement, etc. To some, the eyes are unimportant, but the mouth, lips are what excite them. Different shapes of noses, ears, faces have different effects on different women. Mustaches and sideburns are attractive to some but repel others. The point is that some aspect of the fact is important to almost every Latin American female. Some are excited by the size and shape of the body, others are not. In most cases, the overall poise or way of carrying himself is viewed as an important aspect in declaring a man is handsome.

In a sense, Latin American women are not as concerned with selecting a truly handsome man, as with being stuck with an ugly one. As I see it, physical characteristics are only a primary screening criteria for the females in their process of judging men. Although North American movie stars do not necessarily create a lot of excitement among Latin American females, I can think of a few that are generally rated as good looking. Clark Gable, Rock Hudson, Marlon Brando and Robert Taylor are those that come closer to the Latin American female's definition of handsome.

Males, like females, do not have a definitive ideal of beauty but there are some general patterns in what excite them. The most common desirable characteristic in a female, according to Latin American males, is an ample derriere. Broad hips are considered exciting by a great number of Latin American males. Facial characteristics are second on the list of physical aspects that excite Latin American males. As in the case of the females, there are variations as to what specific facial characteristics are attractive to Latin American males. Some men are excited by long hair, others by long fingers, others by heavy legs, others by hair on the legs and/or arms, others by the shape of the body, and so on. Some exceptions are worth noting: lean bodies (skinny) are not considered attractive.

In general, Latin American males want their females to be on the full or plump side. Large breasts or even full breasts are not considered attractive. In general, breasts are not of great importance in exciting these males.

Given physical attraction, both males and females will then consider other criteria. One of the other areas of evaluation is temperament, or character. The evaluation in this area is based on judgments made on the basis of information obtained from mutual friends, and/or by watching the potential mate interact with others (that is in most cases done from afar).

Females judge men in terms of their sensitivity, ability to be pleasant and pleasing (the issue is if the mate is "simpatico" or engaging), trustworthiness, seriousness, and level of responsibility. The females want their men to be pleasant, polite, respectful and responsible. As some females have pointed out to me, they want a good man that would care for them. Above all, the female wants a man that has self-respect and does not overemphasize the flesh, i.e., a man capable of integrating his life.

Males also consider temperament or character as an important aspect in choosing a female. The men want their mates to be honest, faithful, pure, conscientious, humble, dedicated and interested in the home and the children. In a nutshell, men want a good wife, i.e., a person who will take care of them and give them love and support.

In my research I asked a group of Puerto Ricans to describe the ideal male and the ideal female. The responses of both males and females focused on the temperament area. Not one of the forty subjects mentioned physical characteristics in the sketch of their ideal male/female. Where the ideal female was described as a good housewife, the ideal male was described as a good provider.

The last item mentioned above suggests that economic considerations are of importance in the choice of a mate, especially for females. Males are judged by females in terms of not only their willingness to work and provide but also

at what level they are able to do so. Accordingly, men of means are viewed as attractive by Latin American females.

The interviews mentioned above provided information that suggests that some men consider as a desirable trait the female's ability to help support the household by working. Through participant observation, I have been able to establish that the economic situation of a female (or her family) is a factor considered by males in choosing a mate. Males, in discussing females among themselves, generally make comments as to their families' economic status. Specifically, they talk about how the female's family economic situation can provide them with connections that can be translated into better jobs or at least provide some kind of an economic advantage. At the very least, to marry a female from a family of means provides a ready source of funds if life does not provide economically as the male hoped for.

The economic factor has been historically very important in Latin America. During the Colonial period and for many years afterwards, marriages were arranged and economics was one of the key aspects in the negotiations. Social status or prestige was also an important factor in those negotiations. A family with high status but short on funds could negotiate an alliance through marriage with a rich family that lacked status.

Today, status still is a point condiered in choosing a mate. Both males and females will consider persons of high status as desirable mates. The importance of this factor has diminished but it has not been abandoned.

As noted above, character seems to be the key factor in choosing partners but this is not necessarily so in all cases. Depending on the situation of the person choosing and his/her value orientation, any one of these factors can outweigh the others. Although the conditions affecting the ranking of the criteria vary from person to person, there are some patterns that emerge in everyday life. For examp.e, the rich seem to focus on physical beauty. The poor tend to be most

concerned with ability to provide and level of economic well being of the potential mate. These tendencies produce a number of interesting combinations.

Rich men tend to marry beautiful women. Rich females who are not extremely attractive in some cases marry handsome men who are poor. The crossing of economic lines, i.e., rich-poor combinations, are present but their frequency is limited by barriers created by patterns of interaction. For example, poor men are forced into the labor market early in life while the rich females goes on to the University. The potential for meeting is therefore limited by the patterns of interaction in which each becomes embedded because of their economic situations.

The discussion of criteria to select mates presented above suggests a kind of calculating, rational approach to the selection of mates. At the beginning of the search, the process seems to function in that manner, within the limits set by patterns of interaction (social structure), but emotions soon enter into the picture and change the character of the selection process.

5. Levels of emotional commitment. The process of selecting a mate does not occur in a physical nor in an emotional vacuum. People do not sit in a room considering potential mates. Their evaluations are made in the process of interacting with other people, i.e., one evaluates those that one comes in contact with. As one evaluates, feelings about the people being evaluated emerge. In this section, I will discuss these emotions and will try to present them on a graduated scale.

Physical attraction can generate various feelings or emotions. The less refined of these emotions is lust or sexual desire. It is generally assumed that males will generate such emotion but females will not. In any case, only rarely do you find a male who would concede to feel this way. In most instances, physical attraction is said to be reflected as a liking. In Spanish, the phrase used to refer to this liking is "me gusta" (I like, I want) so and so. This phrase implies a liking, an appreciation of the other's beauty, and also a wish to possess

and to enjoy that physical beauty. The phrase also expresses a wish to be close to the person and enjoy their company.

Both males and females will develop this liking and will show how they feel to friends of the same sex. To feel this way about various persons is not considered out of order. This is a natural feeling. There is no sense of urgency attached to this feeling, i.e., there is no drive to have the other person reciprocate one's emotional state. There is no sense of responsibility or duty attached to this feeling either. To like someone does not imply that one feels commitment toward that person and there is no demand for loyalty.

If one is attracted physically to another person it is only natural that one will take steps to establish interaction with that person. If the other person is attracted to one, he/she will also take steps to establish interaction. Accordingly, when attraction is mutual, it is almost certain that the subjects will interact, unless social factors prevent it. If the attraction is not mutual, the person that is not attracted to the other will take action to block one's attempts to establish interaction. I will discuss the techniques used to establish or prevent the establishment of interaction in the next section.

Given mutual attraction interaction will follow. During that process of interaction, other factors will be considered in evaluating the potential mate and at the same time feelings will change. One or both of the persons may find the other person unsuitable or may somehow start to dislike the other, or the "liking" will turn into a more tender feeling. "Liking" in the latter case becomes a form of love, a caring, a fondness, and a "balanced" desire for the other person that Latin Americans call "querer." The verb "querer" is translated into English as "to want," but when used to refer to the feelings of a person for another it looses the sense of "want," "desire." This is clear when one notes that there are two types of "querer," one referring to filial love and fondness between friends, which is also called "cariño,"* and the male-female "querer." In the

latter case, the added component is what I called "balanced" desire, i.e., one wishes to enjoy some sensual pleasure with this person, not for its own sake but as a way to express the fondness and love one feels for the person.

When a person "quiere" (loves) a person of the opposite sex, there is a wish to exclude all others. This kind of love brings with it the need to be reciprocated. There is also a sense of commitment. One wishes to be with this person, to make possible for them to enjoy life and to have happiness. There is a sense of duty toward the other. To love in this way, then, means that one wishes the other to love one and one feels a desire to give of oneself. Nonetheless, this type of love does not involve a full commitment to the other person. It is like a controlled burn as compared to a raging fire. There is a sense that one can end the feeling, that one is in control.

The kind of love involved in "querer" is in a sense a pale copy or reflection of love--"amor." When "querer" becomes "amor," the love looses control. "Amor" is a raging fire that cannot be put out by the lover. To love in this way (amor) is to want to be one with the other, to share one's life. "Amor" means full commitment to the other, putting the other before oneself. There is also the concommitant desire, demand, need that one's feelings be reciprocated if not in kind at least that the other love (quiera) one. This kind of love is exclusive and does not allow for the other person to have any fondness for other persons of the opposite sex.

"Amor" is considered a sacred kind of feeling and therefore is not to be toyed with. This kind of love is a passion, but one that is viewed as spiritual as well as carnal. The phrase "yo te amo" (I love you) is restricted to be used between males and females*. This is the kind of love that one hopes to develop with one's spouse, which brings us back to its sacred status.

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*There is only one situation where the word "amor" (love) is used outside of male-female relationships and that is to refer to the way mothers feel about their offspring--"amor de madre." A mother's love for her offspring (especially the male children) is also defined in Latin America as sacred.

"Amor" is not the ultimate love, there is one still more intense form of loving--adoración. Worship (adoración) means just that--one reveres and enshrines the loved one. In this case, the key is that one is totally involved with the loved one. No sacrifice is too little for one's "adorado" (adored one). If "amor" is passion, "adoración" (worship) is madness. To lose the person whom one worships is simply unthinkable. This form of love demands to be answered and demands not only exclusivity but devotion. Those that love in this way center their whole life on the person they love.

The level of worship in male-female relationships is generally reached by males and not by females. This is congruent with the fact that men are considered to be the ones least capable of curbing their emotions, i.e., allowing the flesh to overcome the spirit. Worship is generally viewed as a situation where the emotions become basically of the flesh, i.e., out of balance. The tendency of males being the ones reaching the worship level is also consistent with the fact that males are the ones that express their emotions toward the partner. The man is the one in Latin America who expresses how he feels about the female. The female rarely will explicitly and spontaneously state how she feels about the man. This is a source of tension in male-female relationships as men tend to suspect females of playing or toying with their feelings. That is, males are afraid that the female may be stringing them along, when she does not love him.

In this section, I have outlined the progression of feelings involved in the mate selection process. As implied above, the females will be more reticent in this area than men; therefore one would expect that the progression for them will be different, at least in terms of pace. In practice, there is not a neat progressive pattern, but rather emotions and feelings develop at their own pace. A person might go from liking (gustarle) to worship in one giant step, or one might go through each level very slowly. There is no explanation or idea of the

dynamics of these emotions. They happen and what triggers them is not known. Love then becomes a part of fate, i.e., it is outside of human control.

6. Patterns of courtship. Fate might control the emergence of emotions and their subsequent development but culture controls the process and pattern of relationships between males and females. The stereotypes discussed above, the criteria for selection, and the development of emotions are embedded into a definitive pattern of interaction that further specifies the sex roles in Latin America. This process of interaction is the pattern of courtship.

The existing pattern of courtship in Latin America is quite different from the dating process in the U.S. Dating regulates the contacts between males and females but is not defined as a process leading to marriage. A pattern of courtship is designed to lead to marriage and clearly specifies the roles of the participants. The specification of roles in turn specifies the specific behaviors involved in selecting a mate and actualizing this selection by getting married.

The courtship process is a very formal one. That is, there is a specific and well delineated set of rules. The formal nature of the process makes it easy to divide the process into stages for the purpose of analysis: 1) early stages, 2) noviazgo, 3) formalization of the relationship, and 4) marriage. In order to set this process into its context, I will discuss first the general patterns of interaction between single males and females and then proceed to discuss the four stages.

a. The relationships between uncommitted people in Latin America are marked by isolation and public scrutiny. Unattached females will only interact with males who are known to her family or with males in roles involving secondary (formal) relationships. Ideally, their interactions with any males in the available category or males who may attempt to establish a relationship with them will be public and witnessed. That is, unattached females will be accompanied by relatives or other females when interacting with males. This injunction

will be public and witnessed. That is, unattached females will be accompanied by relatives or other females when interacting with males. This injunction applies to routine events like shopping. Participation in "social" events (parties, etc.) will require the presence of adults or members of the family--i.e., chaperones.

The chaperone is viewed in a sense as a witness who will attest to the purity of the interaction. In a different sense the chaperone is like a body-buard that protects the female from the behavior of unscrupulous males. In still another sense, the chaperone makes it unnecessary for the female to control her own impulses and those of the male; the third party (the chaperone) will do this for them.

A female that goes into public by herself runs the risk of being considered loose. A lone female is interpreted as a female that is willing to interact with "unknown" males without witnesses. The absense of witnesses allows the male to draw her into situations where they can engage in carnal pleasure. The being alone is interpreted as a sign that the female is willing for this to happen. This is considered specially true if the situation or place (e.g., movie) or event (e.g., party) provide ready made opportunities to engage in sensual activities.

Males are allowed to be on their own, but in most cases males too go about in groups (same sex). The males then are free to interact with any female, especially those willing to engage in sensual activities. In practice they have few opportunities to interact with "unknown" females on a one-to-one basis.

Generally speaking, females will not interact with males to whom they have not been formally introduced. The requirement of introductions in order to interact provides a set of references to the male. In order to be introduced, the male has to be known to one of the female's friends or relatives. The one glaring exception to this pattern is dancing at a party with a man whom one does not know. However, that male would not be there if he were a stranger to the hosts, i.e., the invitation is a kind of implicit reference.

In summary, males and females have very little opportunities to interact, except in formal ways or secondary-type situations. Each sex is for all practical purposes isolated from the other. As we shall see below, even as males and females get to know each other their interactions are pretty well controlled and monitored. As pointed out before, this is so because males are not to be trusted, and females want to ensure the best possible match.

In most countries in Latin America education is structured to keep the sexes apart. Schools are not co-educational. Where schools have gone co-educational the structure and pattern of isolation becomes cracked, but is not shattered. In co-educational schools the pattern still holds in the sense that male-female interactions occur within group contexts--i.e., are witnessed. In those situations schoolmates become classified as friends and also in many instances actually are known to each other's families. Emotional involvement will occur generally across grades or levels and, therefore, the restrictions discussed above are operative. Nonetheless, it is indisputable that co-educational situations provide more opportunities for male-female interaction directed at establishing emotional relationship at an earlier age than single sex schools.

The major difference between places with co-educational schools and those with single sex institutions is in the level of interaction within groups. Where there are co-educational schools interaction within groups between males and females is much more prevalent. When schools are single-sex interaction between males and females is more structured and occurs more within the bounds of traditional structures. The traditional structures tend to be abandoned or lose their primacy in the places where co-educational schools appear. In societies or areas where high schools are single-sex, but the corresponding universities are co-educational, we find the same weakening of the traditional structures for the university students.

In the present context, I will limit the discussion of traditional structure to two specific examples: parties and public plaza. Parties in Latin America occur at home and are in many cases limited to family. Parties that go beyond the family setting are set in such a way that guests are known to the hosts. Parents and relatives will always be present at such occasions. The presence of adults provide the necessary scrutiny for interactions. Nonetheless, a female who comes to a party with a male to whom she has some commitment will be accompanied by a relative too.

Parties, as those referred to above, generally involve dancing and very little conversation across sex lines, except among groups of friends. That is, conversation between potential mates is limited. By the nature of the parties and the criteria used to invite people, the presence of potential mates is limited.

Parties at public places, like "Fiestas," or going dancing at night clubs do not provide real opportunities for male-female interactions either. Partipation in community-based "Fiestas" or festivals requires that females go in groups or with their families. The male-female interaction is still limited to people who are known to each other.

At night clubs, one may find females on their own, who by definition are rated as loose. Good women do not go alone to such places. In fact good females generally go to night clubs either in groups or with a prearranged partner. In the latter case, a chaperone will also be present. Formal dances, e.g., proms, require the prearranged partner and the chaperone too. In short, parties, dances and public festivals do not provide opportunity for direct one-on-one interaction between males and females.

The other traditional setting that I want to consider refers to what in many places is called "el paseo" (the walk). Almost every Latin American town

has a central park-like plaza. In most places on Sunday after high mass, young people would meander through the plaza for an hour or two. In some places walks are very highly structured, e.g., males walk counter-clockwise and females clockwise, or females walk around while males sit on benches, or vice versa. In others there is no pattern. Nonetheless, males are with males and females with females. Male-female couples only occur when there is a formal commitment between them and in those cases the couple will be chaperoned.

The "paseo" does not provide for direct one-on-one interaction between males and females either. In a sense, this tradition is the institutionalized outlet for "window shopping." "El paseo" allows each person to look over the available members of the opposite sex--i.e., the potential mates. As we shall see below, the "paseo" provides some opportunities to also make contacts and be introduced, but it does not allow for one-on-one interaction.

As one can see, the social structure does not provide much opportunity for one-on-one interaction between the sexes. Access to people of the opposite sex is very restricted and is allowed to occur only in very well controlled situations. When contacts occur in open situations males will consider the females as loose and therefore will limit their interactions to seek sensual pleasure. In other words a male will not consider as a potential mate a female he has met in an "open" situation.

There is one traditional pattern of contact (for reasons that will become clear below I do not feel this can be rated as an interaction) between males and females that is worthy of attention because it dramatizes the pattern of relationships between the sexes. This pattern involves what Latin Americans call "piropos". A "piropo" is a laudatory statement made to a female by a male. Such a statement celebrates some outstanding or attractive characteristic of the female. The male may say somthing like, what beautiful eyes (etc.), or I would like to be a pair of shoes to be at your feet all the time. In some countries the statements are "risque" but generally they are simply outlandish compliments.

Males (especially young ones) will stand in groups at street corners or in the plaza during the "paseo" and spend hours upon hours making such complimentary comments ("piropos") to passing females.* This behavior is tied to the feeling that males should address all females and show their interest. Females on their part do not respond to these compliments. In fact females completely ignore the "piropos". Females are not expected to react to the compliments. They would go by as if no one was standing in the corner much less acknowledge that they had been addressed. For this reason I do not consider this a true instance of interaction.

If a female responds in some way to the compliment, by looking at the speaker, or verbally abusing him, or coming back with some witticism the male will then follow her. As he walks by her he will try to make an assignation or get the female to go with him to a place where they could enjoy each other sensually. The key to this by play is that by reacting the female (it is assumed) has advertised her availability for seeking pleasure.

If a female goes by a group of males and no comment is made about her person she will feel disappointed and unwanted. That is, although not responding externally the female expects the comment and feels a psychological pay off. Some females actually feel insulted by silence.

"Piropos" serve various functions in the process of courtship. By composing laudatory comments about females the young male learns to develop his verbal ability to address females and compliment them when they have an opportunity to have one-on-one interaction with a female. The experience of making such compliments also helps the male work up courage to address females to whom he is truly attracted. The

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* It must be noted that if the females going by are relatives of one of those present or of their friends then nothing will be said. In that case the one in the group known to the female will politely say good day or good night as the case might be. This also applies to females that are involved with one of the groups or their friends.

females on the other hand learn from these compliments which of her "assets" are admired by the opposite sex. This allows the female to refine her self-image and to figure out ways to enhance her physical attractiveness. At the same time the female is developing her ability to act aloof and indifferent to compliments.

Only in very exceptional situations are "piropos" an active part of the male selection process. The rare case when this does occur is when one of those in the group finds the passing female irresistible and tries to figure out a way to make her acquaintance. That is, a man may discover a potential mate while engaged in this activity. The tradition is not disigned for this purpose and males do not view the activity as part of their search for a male. Males view this as a diversion with no ulterior goal.

Although internally females get a boost from "piropos" they consider males that they have seen doing this as shiftless and potentially irresponsible. Accordingly, if a male who spotted a female for the first time while engaged in making such compliments were to approach her later on he will have to overcome that initial evaluation of being shiftless. This of course reduces the probability of this custom acting as a part of the mate selection process.

As noted physical attraction is the initial point of the mate selection process. The above discussion provides the basis to explain this fact. There is no opportunity for the use of any other criteria as males and females can only interact in public and within the context of a group or under the watchful presence of a chaperone. The social structure and traditions provide for the inspection of potential mates, but only in terms of external (physical) clues. Now I will turn to consider the early stages of the courtship process.

B. Early Stages. Since interaction between males and females cannot occur (or at least is not sanctioned) until the male and the female are formally introduced, the courtship cannot begin until such introductions are made. The

prelude to the courtship involves the initial contact, where one becomes aware of the other and feels attracted. This can happen in church during "el paseo", at a party, at school, or even by pure chance in any public place. Sensing the attraction for a person whom one has seen, one will try to engineer an introduction. This process can be started by either sex.

The most direct approach is to ask a mutual friend to perform the introductions. On some occasions this is relatively simple as one might be aware of a mutual friend. If one is not aware of the existance of mutual friends, then one will watch who the object of one's interest interacts with or ask one's friends if they know the object of one's interest or know somebody that knows the person. Then one makes the arrangements to be introduced to the intermediarys so that he/she will perform the desired introduction.

Males generally seek the introductions explicitly. Females will be surrepititious about it. They may inquire of a close friend (female) explicitly but if this is not productive (the male is unknown to one's friend), then the female will set it up so that in the end she and the male are present at the same time in the same place (most commonly a party) and be introduced. (Even at a party the female is expected to act aloof toward males to whom she has not been formally introduced, i.e., she will limit her interactions to the minimum required by good manners even while dancing.)

Besides the actual people involved, friends and relatives might engineer meetings between mutual friends or relatives whom they think would be suited to each other. That is, there are people who will also act as match makers. People playing the role of match makers on may occasions will check with the female as to their reaction to the male.

The formal introduction will be followed by some verbal interaction. Such conversations will be very general and can be classified as polite conversation. Often the conversation will involve discussing what is happening around them or the

people around them. At some point in the conversation if both parties have not erected walls, they will talk about friends and acquaintances, and in so doing determine if they have friends in common. The male will try to find the general vicinity where the female lives, and if possible her address. Among young people they will talk about school. This topic will allow each to determine the school the other attends, as well as if they have friends in common.

Generally speaking, the topic conversations will not turn to friends and school on first acquaintance, except when one of the parties is more than mildly interested in the other. The discussion of school and friends provides clues that will allow future contacts. For example, one would seek invitations to parties given by such mutual friends or one might pay a visit to the others school. Females will be very careful to ensure that the lust type of happenings look truly accidental. The favorite approach is to go with a friend and claim the friend is looking for someone. By learning the address of the female the male will be able to visit the neighborhood and stop to talk to the female if they "happen to meet". In the latter case the male will not go to visit the female's house rather he will go by it.

Visits to school, passing by the house of the female are ways for the male to inform the female of his interest. The female may then give him the cold shoulder (ignore him) or interact with him thus informing him that she is not displeased by his attentions. Such interactions will lead the male to seek more opportunities to be with the female or be where she is at. As their encounters become more frequent they will start to inform the other of their future activities, thus insuring further contacts.

In most instances the female while providing information that will ensure further contacts, will act uninterested and suggest that the male ought to stop following her. When the female acts this way the pattern of behavior of the male becomes like a siege. He will "camp" in her neighborhood and explicitly avail

himself of opportunities to be where she will be. If the female truly is not interested in this male she has to be very direct and explicit telling him that she wishes him to disappear as she is feeling bothered by his attentions. The female could also notify the male of her disinterest by having a mutual friend ask him to stop the siege.

In the cases where schools are co-educational and the prospective couple attend the same school the siege will be based in the school. He will try to spend all his free time close to her, joining the groups she is interacting with, walking her home, waiting on the sidelines if she is involved in after school activities, and attending functions (parties, games, etc.) that he expects her to be at.

As the siege proceeds the man may become more and more emotionally involved. The female will still be doubting his motivations and will remain aloof without discouraging him much. During this period of the relationship the only physical contact between them would occur while dancing as even holding hands is considered too intimate. If a male presses for contact or for kisses he might find himself explicitly rejected and told to cease and desist. If the female responds positively to his caresses or attempted caresses then he will most probably define her as loose and limit his interest to the obstention of carnal pleasure. In short, the seige involves mutual testing: the female checking the male as to his intentions and level of commitment and the male checking if the female is good or loose.

As the male starts to make the rounds of the female's place of residence his presence will be noted. The female's family will investigate through relatives and friends the background of the male. If the male is acceptable, the female will be teased by her family about her suitor. If the male is not acceptable, she will be questioned as to what is going on. The family will also increase the vigilance and make it difficult for her to get into contact with him. In some cases they might even try to encourage some other relationships and/or have a male member

of the family approach the male and ask him to stop the siege. It is at this stage that status, reputation of the male and economics enter into the process of selection, as these are criteria that the family will use.

The male's family will generally note when he is developing a "serious interest" in a female. Much like the female's family, they will investigate the female and her family. If the female is acceptable to the family nothing is said or done. If the female is not acceptable, indirect comments would be made that might get the male to re-evaluate his feelings. Friends will be enlisted to provide a new set of acquaintances by having the male invited to parties among a different set of people. In extreme cases whatever negative data has been obtained is presented to the male. If the male has reached the emotional level of amour, little can be done to dissuade him. In that case the family might turn to prayer or magic to breakup the relationship.

The siege formally ends when the female accepts a direct invitation to have the male be her partner at a formal dance or to go out to dinner or a movie. In other words when the female accepts an invitation to go out with the male, even if it involves inviting others to go as a group, she is clearly signaling her interest in the male and her willingness to make the relationship somewhat exlusive. After accepting such an invitation, the male expects that she will not accept invitations from other males. The female is also expecting that the male will not be inviting other females to go out. At this point the exclusivity of the relationship is implicit, and no specific sense of commitmant is assumed to exist. Each person involved hopes that there is commitment and that there are loving ("querer") feelings toward the other.

For a while the male and the female will be going out as a couple. Even if they still go with a group of friends, they interact as a couple. The others will recognize their status as a couple and allow them opportunities to talk "in private" but in plain sight of everyone. The chaperones will act pretty

much in the same way that friend do. Slowly the male will act more and more explicitly as if they were a couple. Meanwhile the female would act as if nothing had changed in the relationship. They are "friends," she will tell her friends. She will also resist any action of the male that assumes that they are committed to each other. The major change in the relationship is that at parties they now might hold hands. Kisses and caresses are not allowed. If they were to kiss, the relationship would change in nature, either by becoming a commitment or turning into a pleasurable, pleasure seeking relationship.

A kiss would mean that there is a definitive emotional link between them. In many cases, the male will make this clear by expressing his love for the female. That is, the male declares his love and his hope to marry her. When the male resorts to the verbal declaration of love, the female will not respond or will beg the question. She will not verbally commit herself. In some cases, the man takes a less explicit line of action and simply asks if she would be his "novia,"* i. e., they would be engaged to be engaged. Again the female will hedge.

C. Noviazgo. Once a male declares his love or asks the female to be his "novia," the relationship has reached its climax. This is the point where it can be ended or where it would be set onto a firm road to marriage. To be "novios" is to enter into a complex, formal, and clearly defined relationship. To be "novios" is to say that you are committed to each other, that you are at least loving to each other (have reached the level of "querer") and that you expect to get married sometime in the future.

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*It must be noted that the noun "novia also means bride and "novio" groom. At this point in the relationship this title means that they intend to get married in the future.

The relationship makes the couple accountable to each other. It is expected that "vocios" want to spend as much time together as they can. Accordingly, they will interact less and less with others. Now they will get to know each other better, even though they will be chaperoned more closely. They will exchange information about intimate situations in their families.

The status of "novios" means that the male can make gifts to the female and she can accept them. At this point, they will begin to make decisions jointly. This generally means that the male consults with the female and the female tells him of her decisions. Normally at this point, they will hold hands every place and will kiss in private. Over time they might become more intimate; caresses of errogenous zones might occur (but generally much later on, if at all).

The female rarely will verbally commit herself to become his "novia." She might do it by allowing him to hold her hand in public or by kissing and hugging him or by allowing him to put his arm around her waist in public. In many cases, the relationship is sealed by a third party. Someone may ask are you "novios"? The male will look at the female. If she does not react, he will say yes and by her silence she has accepted the designation. In my questioning of Puerto Rican males, I discovered that even when a female explicitly agrees to be his "novia" only rarely would she say "I love you" (yo te quiero or yo te amo). The male will say it again and again.

d. Formalization of the relationship. Everyone but the female family will readily recognize that the couple have become "novios." From the point of view of the family the male is still a friend. This means that the family will consider the participation of the male in decisions of the female as intrusions. Also, decisions will be made about her completely ignoring him, e.g., as to taking her on trips and not inviting him. The family will recognize the male status as "novio" only when he has come to the house and asked permission to court her, i.e., to visit her at the house with the understanding that he intends

to marry her in the future.

In some Latin American societies, this whole process is abbreviated for the lower classes. Contact leads quickly to seige (but without the partying) and siege leads to declaration and the formal petition to be considered as a suitor. This in most poor families quickly leads to marriage or the establishment of housekeeping arrangements.

Among middle and upper classes, the formal entry as a suitor into the house of the female by the male is followed by a formal engagement period. Once the couple is ready or decides to get married, his parents will visit her parents and formally ask for the female's hand in matrimony for their son. At this point, the questions about how the man intends to support the female will be reiterated. Normally on granting the hand of the female to the male, a date is arranged for the wedding.

The formal request for her hand by his parents makes the marriage an agreement between the families rather than a private agreement between the lovers. This assumes to make the promise of marriage a more binding one. The public announcement of the engagement further strengthens the commitment of both families to each other.

The formal engagement provides for the relaxation of the chaperone system, especially during daylight hours when the couple will be involved in making preparations for their life together. For formal occasions and parties, the mother of the female will act as chaperone.

e. Marriage. The whole courtship process ends with the wedding. This will involve a church ceremony. According to Latin Americans, one is not truly married unless the bond and commitment is sealed in front of God in church. To mark the wedding socially, a "grand" party will be held.

Marriage seals the relationship between male and female--now they can become one. This oneness will be symbolized by their children. Marriage and

family requires adjustments in the relationships of the couple. New responsibiltities are created, new privileges obtained. The roles of the male and the female are thus transformed. In the next part of this paper, I will consider those transformations and the emerging family structure.

C. Family Structure

The marriage converts the couple into the nucleus of a brand new family. This new family does not exist as a unit by itself. It is part of a larger network of such families that make up an extended family. In practice, the new family belongs to two such extended networks, the groom's and the bride's; but officially, the new family is considered to be part of the groom's family, at least in terms of lines of authority.

The practical and official links of the new family are made manifest in the name of the family and its members. The groom's name remains unchanged, the bride's name is changed. The bride is to drop her mother's maiden name from her name and takes her husband's name. The husband's name is attached with the word "de." For example, if José Perez Diaz marries Elena Gonzales Rodriguez, her name becomes Elena Gonzales de Perez. The word "de" signifies that now she too belongs to the Perez family. On ther other hand, José, Elena and their children will be known as the Perez Gonzales family. It is this name that will be put on the mailbox and/or on the front of the house.

The name changes discussed above make explicit the new set of relationships. The woman belongs to the Perez family now but the couple and their children belong to the Perez and the Gonzales families. The female retains her identity and that identity is imprinted in the new family.

The dynamics generated by the marriage bring the groom's and the bride's families into a new relationship but do not blend the families into a single family. True membership in a family is defined by blood lines. Accordingly, the

bride is attached to her husband's family but she will not be considered a true member because the blood of that family does not run in her veins. The same applies to the male. This view of family membership will keep the relationships between in-laws at the formal level. For example, the parents of the bride and the groom will not resort to first names; they will use the formal "Ud" in their interactions.

The new family in turn will also generate what might be called a family of choice. As children are born and baptized, their Godparents will become 'compadres' (co-parents) which form a family of choice

The marriage does not dissolve the links between parents and children. The mothers of the male and the female will continue to have input into the decisions of the couple and especially in the rearing of the children. This input is rarely resented and in most cases is sought. Among some groups, the new couple would go to live with the male parents (in some rare cases with the bride's family). Today, in most instances, the new couple will establish their own household.

When a new household is created, it is understood that the male will have the responsibility to provide for his wife and children. The woman will be responsible for the administration of the household, and if needed, to help provide for the family. The female role as administrator of the household (Ama de casa--or master of the house) has a different status than the role of housewife in the U.S.A. The female is responsible for the finances. She will be making all buying decisions and her decisions on the day-to-day running of the house go unchallenged. The male is not supposed to be involved in these decisions.

In my research, I asked the subjects to comment on the statement that the man is the head of the household. The females responded that the man has the primary responsibility but that he should not make decisions without consulting

with the female. Males stated that decisions are mutual and must be so. When I pushed the females on the issue of running the household, they said that they had full control.

I probed further as to decisions relating to the male's job or career. The men say that they consulted with their wives on all decisions. When you consider that the female makes independent decisions at home, the scope of their control seems to be larger than their initial responses indicate. In my view, the female is aware of the extent of her power but wants to make it look as if the male was controlling the relationship.

The female is not trying to be manipulative but rather she is willing to concede to the man the right to veto decisions, at least in the abstract. Males seldom exercise this veto, and when they do, generally it is in areas involving the honor of the family or when they are fearful of losing their wives. As a child, the man learned to rely on his mother. When married, he is ready to rely on his wife. The man is quick to concede that the female is a shrewd negotiator, especially in the market. Men do not haggle prices but women do.

The female is in charge of child rearing and rarely does the male enter into the process. The role of mother is patterned after the Virgin Mary. The female is first a mother and then a wife. She is bound to her children, even when they will bring her much suffering. The mother generally pays more attention to the male children, as they are the ones needing more guidance due to their inability to balance soul and body. As female children are given more independence, they grow to be more autonomous and capable of making independent decisions than the male.

The independence of the male is generally quoted to justify their responsibility for the finances of the family. In general, men are not considered stable enough to handle the family finances. They are too emotional and unable to say no to their children and wives. The female stability and assertiveness leads

to making the female responsible for dealing with any conflict situation that the family is involved in.

The brief outline presented above of some aspects of the roles of husband and wife generates a picture different from the docile, battered wife mentioned in the first part of this work. The misperception presented by North American commentators in my opinion is due to their uncritical acceptance of the female statements about relationships between husband and wife. The women do not want to make their husbands lose face. For example, if a man becomes autocratic in public, the wife will quietly acquiese but at home, she would raise Cain. The female's humble tone and demeanor, which results from her ability to balance body and soul, and from a sense of self assurance, has been interpreted by many commentators as meekness (in the worst sense of the word).

One other area presented by North American commentators as as example of the domination of the husband over the wife is extramarital relations. According to the commentators, the male is allowed to keep a mistress and/or to freely have sexual relations with other females. The "casa chica" or mistress house has been a reality in Latin America, but its existence did not mean absolute freedom for the male. For a sense, the mistress proved the weakness of the male. The mistress of "querida" (the loved one) was a phenomenon that flourished during the time that marriages were arranged.

Given an arranged marriage, the man would not be able to satisfy his need to be loved. Therefore, he would find love in the arms of a woman other than his wife. The female, being strong, was believed not to need such emotional support. What is rarely pointed out is that in those times, females satisfied their sexual needs by taking lovers, but they did it quietly. The man had to support his "querida" economically, not only out of love but out of duty to the children she would bear him.

In the present, "queridas" are rare, partly because it is too expensive to have one. As suggested above, to have a mistress implies incurring the same obligations of support one has toward the family created by marriage. Such burden can only be borne by a few males. Another reason for the demise of the mistress is that marriages now involve love so the man does not need to go outside of the marriage to find it.

The other side of the picture presented by the North American commentators is that women are not allowed to engage in extramarital sex. As pointed out above in the past, they did so. Today, infidelity by a female is condoned when the husband cannot satisfy her physical needs in the sexual area. This, of course, also applies to men.

The last aspect of this issue that I want to consider is the view that females condone their husbands' extramarital sexual activities. Asked if wives should condone such behavior, all 40 Puerto Rican subjects said no. Some females said they might overlook an indiscretion or two, but not if it were to be a regular thing. Most females said they would not condone such behavior and males were unanimous in their rejection of extramarital sex.

If one takes a quick glance at "crimes of passion" in Latin America, some interesting patterns emerge. Males seem to kill out of egotism or pride, rather than rage. Men tend to kill a woman who spurns his love or plays with his feelings, and pardon her if she attests to loving him and promise to come back to him. If the man feels the other man corrupted, seduced his wife, he will kill him and not the wife. The female, by contrast, is more likely to kill her mate and do it as punishment.

In general, a man that indulges in extramarital sex is viewed as a low person--"un sinvergvenza." This is, extramarital sex is negatively sanctioned.

At various points in the discussion of sexuality, I stated that intercourse is not viewed in Latin America as proof of masculinity, i.e., sexual identity is

not grounded on the capacity to copulate. Latin Americans judge both masculinity and femininity in terms of the ability to procreate. In other words, a marriage without issue would create problems for the sexual identity of both the male and the female. Generally speaking, the female ability to procreate is assumed but not the male's. Accordingly, in a childless marriage, the male will face a more dramatic identity crisis than the female.

In conclusion, the structure of the family in Latin America is patrilineal but the family tends to be ruled by the female. This structure provides for a balance at least in principle. The roles of both sexes are provided with positively valued functions. Given the structure described above, it is no surprise that women are not seeking liberation. The place of the female in the world of work further strengthens her position in the society.

D. Women in the World of Work

In Latin America, it is not uncommon for the female to work in order to help support the household. In some cases, the females' jobs have higher status than those of their husbands'. Furthermore, in general, the females do not find themselves relegated to menial occupations. Given equal training and similar contacts, females are treated the same as men in terms of salaries and promotions.

The foregoing does not mean that there are no sex-typed jobs that are generally filled with members of one sex. Some occupations are defined as male occupations because they require physical strength or because they would demean the female. Nonetheless, when females apply for such jobs, in most cases, they are given the opportunity to prove they can do it.

Some occupations are traditionally occupied by females. Dentists and teachers are two common examples. In such occupations, females control the leadership positions within the professional organizations or labor unions as the case may be. In such situations, females also control the administrative positions in the field of endeavor. For example, in education if the majority of persons in

the profession are females, the females will be more numerous both in the classroom and in the administrative positions such as those of principal and superintendent.

In general, females are considered as intelligent, competent, and assertive. They are also judged by their performance as much as males are. In this area, one must remember that in Latin America contacts sometimes are more important than ability. If a woman has the contacts, she will not be denied a position or promotion. Women are not expected to provide sexual favors to their employers.

A result of the conditions outlined above is that women are not underrepresented in the executive ranks. In the area of politics, females have been active and successfully so. For example, the wives of presidents are in many cases political forces in their own right, e.g., Eva Peron. They are active both in partisan politics and in the day-to-day running of the government. The only example in the history of the U.S.A. of a president's wife who can be said to match the pattern that exists in many Latin American countries is Eleanor Roosevelt. Furthermore, many cities with populations of a million plus have been administered by female mayors.

Among the peasants, the wife is an equal partner in the field work. Peasant females not only work the fields but also bring the product to the market and handle the direct sale. In the market, the female deals with the area where price fluctuates while the man deals with the wholesaler where prices are fixed by outside forces. Even in the wholesale area, peasant women will generally brief their husbands and provide them with guidelines.

Small businesses are generally co-managed by a husband and wife team. The woman worries about problems while the male deals with the basic public relation issues. Much like at home, the man appears to be at the helm but it is the female that manipulates and controls the policy decisions.

Females have been traditionally excluded from the army. Nonetheless, in revolutions, women act as soldiers and are given commands in parity with the males. The women in such situations are respected and obeyed pretty much in the same manner that they are obeyed in bureaucratic structures. There is no evidence that males resent female bosses.

The prototype female job is "ama de casa" (housewife or administrator of the house). In Latin America, this role is viewed as a respectable and fulfilling one. This is very much so in the middle classes where the housewife might be in charge of a staff of servants.

In the world of work, the female is shoulder-to-shoulder with the male. There are no negative assumptions made about their ability to function in competitive or intellectual situations.

V. Conclusion

The sex roles as defined in Latin America provide for well marked patterns of interactions and the division of labor without restricting the female to the house. The roles are defined as balanced and complementary. Females are seen as better prepared to discharge their existential task--balancing spirit and body. They are also given the important (according to Latin American values) job of raising the next generation. The men are charged with the responsibility of providing economic support for the family. For both sexes, the meaning of life is separate from work and specific duties. Life is made meaningful through interaction, i.e., by living.

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